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MARTYRS AND SUFFERERS

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THE TRUTH.

BY

WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D.D.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.—JESUS CHRIST.

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MARTYRS AND SUFFERERS FOR THE TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

STRANGE THINGS.

THE word of God leads us to expect that truth and piety will always be opposed while there are in the world wicked men. The hatred of the ungodly to the friends of truth is ever deadly. The first man that was born of a woman killed his own brother, only because his own works were evil and his brother's good. It was malice against those who looked for Christ to come into the world that made the Egyptians so cruel to the Israelites. Saul's malice against David was very much of this nature. Wher he wished for a tool of his vengeance against the innocent, he found him. One of his most brutal

minions was Doeg, the Edomite. This bloody monster, at Saul's bidding, fell upon the priests at Nob, and slew on one day four-score and five (that is, eighty-five) persons that did wear a linen ephod. The good men mentioned in the Old Testament were terribly hated and hunted. They were tortured, refusing to save their lives by denying their God. They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings—yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth. This is the true history of many of the people of whom the world was not worthy. They died at the hands of the men for whose salvation they prayed.

Nor did the coming of Jesus Christ put an end to deeds of blood against the saints. The Lord Jesus himself was put to death in the most malignant and shameful manner.

All his faithful apostles also died by violence, except one, and he was saved only by miracle. Indeed, our Lord Jesus candidly told his disciples that they should be hated of all men for his name's sake; and that the time should come when those who should kill them, would be so filled with rage and blindness that they should believe they were doing God service. The apostles no less faithfully warned all who would live godly in Christ Jesus that they must suffer persecution.

Let no one, therefore, be offended at the Christian religion because of malice, slander and persecution for Christ's sake. The seed of the bond woman has always hated the seed of the free woman. Holy and fallen angels cannot work together, for they are not agreed. Neither can men who hate Christ Jesus love those who would lay down their lives for the Son of God.

These things are indeed strange. Why do men in spirit still cry, Release Barabbas and crucify Jesus? The reason is, that the carnal mind is enmity against God.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT SOME HAVE SAID OF PERSECUTION.

I HAVE thought the young reader might be pleased here to see how some great and good men have despised the malice and cruelties of those who sought to frighten them out of their avowed love to Christ, and what others have said of these things.

Stephen, the first Christian martyr, dying, offered two prayers. One was for himself: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The other was for his foes: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Paul said: "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and imprisonments await me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."

Gregory Nazianzen said: "Do they cast us out of the city? They cannot cast us out of that which is in the heavens. If they who hate us could do this, they would do something real against us. The only thing we have really to be afraid of is fearing anything more than God."

To the king of Navarre, Beza said: "Sire, it belongs truly to God's Church rather to suffer blows than to strike them; but let it be your pleasure to remember that the Church is *an anvil* which hath worn out many a hammer."

Leighton said: "The church has sometimes been brought to so low and obscure a point that if you can follow her in history it is by the track of her blood, and if you would see her, it is by the light of those fires in which her martyrs have been burnt."

Jortin remarks: "To banish, imprison, plunder, starve, hang and burn men for religion is not the gospel of Christ, but the gospel of the devil. Where persecution begins, Christianity ends. Christ never used

anything like force or violence, except once; and that was to drive bad men out of the temple, and not to drive them in."

Milner says: "Persecution often does in this life what the last day will do completely—separate the wheat from the tares."

Spencer says: "Let the Church's enemies plough never so deeply, and make furrows on the backs of God's people never so long; yet God's ends are grace and mercy, and peace to do them good in the latter end."

Bowes says: "If you are made to suffer for religion, see that religion do not suffer by you."

CHAPTER III.

WHAT IS PERSECUTION?

PERSECUTION is of three kinds:

1. *Mental.* A wicked spirit is the root of all bitterness. Out of the heart are the issues of life and of death. Every man is what he is inwardly. Cain had never hurt a hair of Abel's head but that he first conceived mortal enmity against him. 1 John iii. 12. The Jews never would have clamoured for the death of Christ had they indulged no deadly malice against him. Matt. xxvii. 18; Mark xv. 10. The patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt. Acts vii. 9. Every malignant passion is in its nature persecuting. Envy is a fearful incitement to wronging others. Yet it is very common. James iv. 5. And although it torments and even slays

its subject (Job v. 2), and is a rottenness in the bones (Prov. xiv. 30), yet it is busy in all lands and in all hearts where the grace of God reigns not. It is the parent of much evil. "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." James iii. 16. It is a base passion, often condemned in Scripture. Prov. xxiii. 7; Rom. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 21. Another form of wickedness leading to persecution is bigotry. The very ignorance of these hot zealots only makes them the more intractable. Watts: "In philosophy and religion the bigots of all parties are generally the most positive." Bigotry is full of spleen and spite. It constantly tends to violence and cruelty. Bigots do every day commit murder in their hearts. Some are bigots by nature, others by trade. Narrow, contracted views are the foster-parents of wrath and wrong. A wrong creed, and a creed blindly adopted, often lead to the same result. Bigotry is not dead. Perhaps it never flourished more than in the nineteenth century.

2. Persecution is often by the tongue. "The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood." Prov. xii. 6. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds." Prov. xviii. 8. He who has never felt the power of scornful and contumelious language, of irony, sarcasm, ridicule, calumny, detraction and evil surmisings, knows not the anguish of good men hunted and hounded by the wicked. There is "a persecution sharper than the axe. There is an iron that goes into the heart deeper than the knife. Cruel sneers and sarcasm, and pitiless judgments and cold-hearted calumnies—these are persecutions." Well does Paul put down "cruel mockings" alongside of scourgings, bonds, imprisonments and death in its most dismal shapes. Heb. xi. 36, 37. "If God's people were not strangers here, the dogs would not bark at them." "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." Luke vi. 26. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against

you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. v. 11, 12.

3. Again, persecution breaks forth into acts of cruelty and murder. It arrests, fetters, whips, banishes, plunders, confiscates, smites, tortures, burns and hangs. It gloats over the misery of its victims. Sometimes it expresses great compassion for the sufferer, but all this is sheer hypocrisy. It is as malevolent as hell. It riots in carnage. It delights in groans. To make its power felt is its feast of fat things.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR WHAT DO MEN PERSECUTE EACH OTHER?

PERSECUTION may be for any cause, or without cause. It is commonly on alleged grounds of difference in science or literature, politics or religion. The scorn and violence of one school of letters toward another is sometimes amazing. Persecution for difference in science is matter of history. The case of Galileo always comes up when this subject is named. Whately says: "Galileo, probably, would have escaped persecution if his discoveries could have been disproved and his reasonings refuted." Political differences commonly engender great animosities. A party long out of power, at last gaining the reins of government, and fearing that their tenure of office will be short, commonly stirs

up the passions of men to an intense glow of heat. Rev. xii. 12. But on no subject is passion so violent and prejudice so potent as on religious differences. Yet seldom do men avowedly persecute others for the real opinions they hold or the actual usages they practice. They often charge something foreign from the real ground of animosity. Persecutors dress their victims in the skins of wild beasts before they set the dogs on them. The anaconda smears its prey all over before swallowing it.

The prophets predicted that the coming of Messiah should engender the spirit of love and concord in all who were heartily subject to him; that the mountains should bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness; that he should break in pieces the oppressor; that he should come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth; that under his glorious reign the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the leopard should lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling

together ; and a little child should lead them. And the cow and the bear should feed ; their young ones should lie down together ; and the lion should eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child should play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child should put his hand on the cockatrice' den. God says that in that blessed day they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. Ps. lxxii. 3–6 ; Isa. xi. 6–8.

CHAPTER V.

PERSECUTION IS FORBIDDEN.

JESUS CHRIST condemned and forbade a fiery, persecuting spirit. When the Samaritans thought that Christ had decided, or was about to decide, against them the controversy betwixt them and the Jews, they did not receive him. "And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven to consume them?" Luke ix. 54. These Samaritans were ignorant idolaters, schismatical and heretical. John iv. 22. They refused to receive the Lord from heaven. Yet Christ would not allow his followers even to imprecate judgments on their enemies. Christ says the very temper displayed by these disciples was all wrong. He says he came not "to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Tillotson: "He came to discountenance all fierceness and rage and cruelty in men one toward another; to restrain and subdue that furious and unpeaceable spirit which is so troublesome to the world and the cause of so many mischiefs and disorders in it; to beget a peaceable disposition in men of the most distant tempers." So when Peter drew his sword, even in defence of Christ's sacred person, the Master said, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Matt. xxvi. 52; John xviii. 11.

The apostles carried out the principles inculcated by Christ. They taught, warned, rebuked and reproved with all long-suffering and doctrine. They called on the early Christians to follow peace and holiness; in meekness to instruct those that fell into error, that they might be recovered from the snares that entangled them; to lay aside all malice and guile, and envies, and wrath, and bitterness, and evil-speaking; to be gentle toward all men; to bless and not to curse.

That for centuries the early Christians held the same views is clear from their writings. The primitive Christians carried out the teachings of Scripture, opposing all compulsion in matters of religion.

Ignatius says: "Count them enemies and separate from them who hate God, but for beating or persecuting them, that is proper to the heathen, who know not God nor our Saviour; do you not so."

Speaking of Christians, Origen says: "We ought to use the sword against no one." Tertullian: "It is no part of religion to compel religion." The same is taught by Cyprian: "The Father has given to the Son what no one can claim to himself—to dash in pieces with a rod of iron the earthen vessels, or become the avenger." Lactantius: "Force and injury are not needful, for religion cannot be compelled. Torture and piety are exceedingly diverse; nor can either truth be joined with violence or justice with cruelty. For religion is to be defended not by killing, but by dying; not by severity, but by patience."

Bernard: "Faith comes by persuasion, not by being thrust upon men. Heretics are to be won, not by arms, but by arguments. Attack them with the Word, not with the sword." Gregory of Rome: "To beat in faith with stripes is a new and unheard-of kind of preaching." Indeed, Du Pin, who has collected many like authorities, says, "The ancients taught with unanimous consent the unlawfulness of compulsion and punishment in religion." And Owen says: "The Christians of those days disclaimed all thoughts of such proceedings."

Persecution belongs to paganism, infidelity, superstition and atheism, not to the temple of Jehovah. It was born in malice, superstition and devilish cruelty. It has been used a thousand times against the truth more than against error. When wielded against heretics it has done far more mischief than has ever been said of it. Owen says that persecution "brought fire and faggot into Christian religion, making havoc of the true Church of Christ and shedding blood of thousands."

Again: "For three hundred years the Church had no assistance from any magistrate against heretics; and yet in all that space there was not one long-lived, far-spreading heresy, in comparison of those that followed."

Besides the arguments already dropped against persecution, Doddridge has at length and successfully maintained these propositions:

1. "Persecution for conscience' sake—*i. e.*, inflicting penalties on men merely for their religious principles or worship—is plainly founded on an absurd supposition that one man has a right to judge for another in matters of religion."

2. "Persecution is most evidently inconsistent with that obvious and fundamental principle of morality that we should do to others as we could reasonably desire they should do to us."

3. "Persecution is evidently absurd, and is by no means calculated to answer the ends which its patrons profess to intend by it."

4. "Persecution evidently tends to produce

a great deal of confusion and mischief in the world."

5. "The Christian religion, which we here suppose to be the cause of truth, must, humanly speaking, be not only obstructed, but destroyed, should persecuting principles universally prevail."

6. "Persecution is so far from being required or encouraged by the gospel, that it is most directly contrary to many of its precepts, and indeed to the whole genius of it."

No man can too deeply abhor both the spirit and practice of persecution. Nor can any one be too much afraid of the guilt of a persecutor. Had Saul of Tarsus known what he was doing when he was persecuting the Church, his damnation would have been as certain as it would have been just. 1 Tim. i. 13. Compare 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

CHAPTER VI.

WHO IS A MARTYR?

THE Greek word from which we get our word martyr occurs more than thirty times in the New Testament, and is commonly rendered *witness*, in the plural witnesses—twice record and thrice *martyr* or *martyrs*. It is applied to judicial witnesses in Matt. xvii. 16; to one who testifies to the truth of what he sees hears or knows, Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8, 22; and to one who not only testifies to the truth, but lays down his life for the truth, Acts xxii. 20; Rev. ii. 13; xvii. 6. In the Scriptures this is the least common meaning of the word, but for centuries ecclesiastical writers have used it in no other sense. All witnesses are not martyrs, but all martyrs are witnesses of something. A martyr, then, is one who by his death bears witness to the truth

of his principles and belief. In strictness of language, according to South, "To be a *martyr* signifies only to witness the truth of Christ; but the witnessing of the truth was then so generally attended with persecution that martyrdom now signifies not only to witness, but to witness by death." Dr. J. W. Alexander says: "A witness is called in Greek a MARTYR. We have borrowed the word and made it sacred in our tongue." Colton says: "He that dies a martyr proves that he is not a knave." He gives the highest proof of his sincerity.

A martyr differs from a *confessor* only in this, that the confessor avows the truth, and his love for it, in the face of danger and when he expects to die for his confession, but in some way his life is spared. A martyr is a confessor who actually lays down his life. In the primitive Church were many confessors—"men that had hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xv. 26. Indeed, in many ages of the world it has been worth all a man's earthly

possessions, and life itself, unflinchingly to avow the simple truth as it is in Jesus. The first martyr was Abel. He being dead yet speaketh. Heb. xii. 4. That is, every reference to his sacrifice and death declares the necessity of an atonement for sin; that if sinners would be accepted of God, they must come penitently confessing their transgressions and asking for mercy through the great sacrifice of Calvary; that justifying righteousness is by faith—a faith that obeys as well as relies; that a believer's inheritance is in a better world; that we must be willing to forfeit the favour and incur the malice of even our own kindred, if we would please God; and that the dying testimony of martyrs is not useless. Posthumous usefulness has marked no class of men more than the martyrs. To this day they have been pre-eminently serviceable in keeping alive a knowledge of the saving truths of Scripture. Testimony sealed with blood God has greatly owned to the salvation of men. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

The faith and constancy of one sufferer for the truth has in one day won hundreds to the Redeemer.

IS EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN AT HEART A MARTYR? If the meaning of this question be, whether at all times God's real people are in such a frame as that, without warning and special preparation, they would universally yield up their lives rather than deny Christ, we must answer in the negative. Peter, Cranmer and others denied Christ and his truth. They were found off their guard. They were taken by surprise. But if the meaning of the question be whether, upon fair notice and after due consideration, a real child of God will yield his life rather than be false to his profession and treasonable to Christ, the answer must be in the affirmative. So Christ has himself determined. Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33. That man is not to be regarded as an established Christian who, upon the call of God, is not willing to be found in a minority of one against millions. Lot was a good man, and, though he dwelt in Sodom,

he was not a sodomite, but the surrounding wickedness vexed his righteous soul from day to day. Noah stood alone in testifying against the wickedness of his times. Caleb, Joshua and Phinehas wrought righteousness and obtained a good report by intrepidly opposing the unbelief and wickedness of the great mass of their nation. The truly faithful stand firm even among the faithless. They are not governed by popular suffrage, but by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. "I can do no otherwise," said Martin Luther, "God help me!" The apostles said, "We ought to obey God rather than man."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW MANY MARTYRS HAVE THERE BEEN?

IT is impossible to answer this question with arithmetical precision. There seems to be no reason for seriously doubting that the whole number in all ages exceeds fifty millions. From the days of Abel there have been many outbursts of the bloody spirit of persecution. What torrents of righteous blood were shed before the deluge we know not. One stroke of the pen of inspiration tells all we know: "The earth was filled with violence." This expression comprehends all kinds of murders as well as of martyrdoms. If in those times the wicked shed each other's blood, it is not credible that the pious escaped their malice. So in the history of the Jews martyrs abounded. It was not a rhetorical figure in Stephen to cry out: "As your

fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." Acts vii. 51, 52. Indeed, of the sufferings of the saints, both by Jews and heathen, Paul speaks when he says, "that through faith they stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted [some read, *were branded;* some, *were burnt alive;* some, *were mutilated;* and some, *were impaled or transfixed*], were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tor-

mented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Heb. xi. 33–37. In some respects we have not a more wonderful history of sufferings for the truth than that we find in the books of Maccabees and in Josephus, relating to the cruelties practiced by Antiochus Epiphanes.

After the death of Christ, the first martyr was Stephen, the history of whose intrepidity, loving disposition and glorious death is given in Acts vi., vii. Many things respecting the close of his earthly existence are worthy of special note, but they are either given in the inspired narrative or are suggested by the practical commentators on the record.

This was but the beginning of the shedding of the blood of saints; for "at that time there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." Acts viii. 1 Stephen's martyrdom is com-

monly supposed to have occurred the same year as our Lord's ascension to heaven. From this time, for near three hundred years, with occasional cessations, the blood of the saints flowed like water. Besides many persecutions confined to villages, cities or provinces, there were ten general persecutions against the Christians in the Roman empire.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST FIVE GENERAL PERSECUTIONS.

THE history of these bloody days is indeed appalling. The FIRST general persecution was under the emperor Claudius Domitius Nero, the son of an ambitious woman, who said, "Let my son slay me, if he may but be emperor." He put on the imperial purple and grasped the imperial sceptre when young, A. D. 50. At first he seemed mild, humane, and even tender-hearted. When first called to sign a death-warrant, he seemed much moved and expressed the wish that he could not write. But he soon became licentious, cruel, vindictive and extremely malignant. He inhumanly put his own mother to death. He cared for neither justice nor mercy. He was the author of many intolerable oppressions and wrongs to his

people. He cared not how much he degraded any class of Romans. Under him Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom. To him Paul is supposed to refer in 2 Tim. iv. 11, as a lion. His persecutions of the Christians as a class, began A. D. 64, and lasted till his death, which occurred in June, A. D. 68. He caused Rome to be set on fire, that he might have the pleasure of seeing a spectacle like that of the burning of Troy, and then charged the awful crime on the Christians. So fearful was the havoc made in the Church that one might see cities full of the bodies of dead men and women cast out uncovered in the open streets. Such crime and cruelty cannot always proceed. If Christian long-suffering forbears and divine mercy withholds direct thunderbolts of wrath, wicked men themselves will not always be idle. High and low at last conspired to rid the world of the intolerable burden of this one man's crimes and iniquities. Seeing condign punishment awaiting him, overwhelmed with anguish, forsaken by those who had applauded his vices, and lashed by a guilty

conscience, he committed suicide, and rushed unbidden into the presence of the God whose martyrs he had slain. Then for a time God's people had less annoyance.

But in A. D. 94 a SECOND general persecution of the Christians in the Roman empire began. It raged with great violence, and gave the crown of martyrdom to multitudes. It was under the authority and instigation of the emperor, Titus Flavius Domitian. Like Nero, his early history promised well. He seemed to have an almost feminine gentleness, an uncommon mildness of disposition. At length his mind took a turn toward cruelty. At first he tortured flies with a bodkin. Soon he became wanton in his inflictions of suffering on men, till in the forty-third year of his age his cruelties burst forth in flaming and indiscriminate wrath against God's people. His pride was insufferable, his arrogance like that of Nebuchadnezzar. He required his own image to be worshipped. His malice was not a little excited against the great men of his empire. He had a special spite

against all the descendants of David, and particularly the near kinsmen of our Lord. In this persecution there was a resort to nearly every conceivable device for inflicting pain and begetting terror. This persecution was also more cunning than that of Nero, inasmuch as all the arts of deception were employed in inventing false charges against the Christians to cover up the foulness of the murders perpetrated under forms of law. It was alleged that Christians held Christ's kingdom was of this world; that all public calamities were owing to the impiety and atheism of Christians; and that the Christians practiced great wickedness, of which no proof was ever submitted. But God at length had mercy on his poor suffering people, took his almighty hand off the hearts of some wicked men, and let loose their horrid passions on Domitian. After two years of persecution of Christians, Domitian was assassinated A. D. 96. Thus ended one of the most cruel and extensive persecutions ever waged against truth and righteousness. Bloody and deceit-

ful men shall not live out half their days. But the Church had rest for only a year or two; for though Domitian was succeeded by the wise and mild Cocceius Nerva, who lived but a short time, yet there soon came the brave and brutal, the popular and persecuting M. Alpinus Crinitus Trajan, whose sensibilities had probably been blunted in the Asiatic campaigns of Vespasian and Titus, and who probably confounded Judaism and Christianity. Under him, in A. D. 98, began the THIRD general persecution, which lasted much longer than those under Nero and Domitian. It was exceedingly dreadful, because, though without the capricious and fitful cruelty of some others, it had the awful severity of the worst, and swept multitudes into eternity. Trajan reigned about twenty years. From his death, A. D. 118, there was no general and legal hunting and murdering of God's people till after the death of Antoninus Pius, which occurred in A. D. 161.

Soon after began the FOURTH general persecution under Marcus Aurelius Antoninus,

who had married Faustina, the daughter of Antoninus Pius, and who reigned nineteen years, with great severity of conduct toward the Christians, although his treatment of his pagan subjects won for him unusual popularity. His son, the feeble, debauched and cruel Commodus, succeeded him and kept up the persecution for twelve years longer, and then perished by poison given him by his concubine, Marcia. One of his last victims was a Roman senator. After the death of Commodus the Church had comparative rest for twelve or thirteen years, till after the middle of the reign of Lucius Septimus Severus, when the FIFTH general persecution began. This emperor was bold, enterprising, and for more than ten years of his power seemed to consult the good of all his subjects. But at length his Cainish malice was roused, perhaps by false and slanderous accusations against the Christians. About A. D. 205 the number of martyrs slain was immense. On all hands was slaughter. But in Africa the number of victims was frightful. Severus died in A. D. 211, but it is not cer-

tain whether in Germany or in Britain—whether by violence or by disease. His end terminated this flow of precious blood for about twenty-four years.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST FIVE GENERAL PERSECUTIONS.

CAIUS JULIUS VERUS MAXIMINUS was the next great persecutor. He was the son of a Thracian peasant, then a successful soldier, then emperor. He was in frame and strength a giant; in temper and conduct wanton and cruel; to good men an object of detestation; to his country a curse. He was raised to imperial power by the army rather than by the senate. He had hardly put on the diadem of the Cæsars until a new Iliad of woes opened on the Church. Under him occurred the SIXTH general persecution of Christians. While it lasted it was indeed dreadful. The authorities at hand are not agreed as to the exact time of his death. It is well known that his career of crime and cruelty was not very long (some say three

years), and was terminated by the very soldiers whom he had made familiar with scenes of murderous carnage. The triumph of the wicked is short.

The SEVENTH general persecution was begun under Decius, who became emperor A. D. 249. The havoc he made of the Church was truly frightful. His rage knew no bounds. He came into power by killing his master Philip, who had been just and even kind to the Christians, and had confided the public treasure to Fabian, a Roman bishop. Perhaps this very circumstance made Decius the more furious against God's people. Although he was emperor but two years, yet it is probable that more martyrs suffered in those twenty-four months than in any equal portion of time under any other of the Cæsars. One sober writer compares the number of martyrs to the sands on the seashore. Decius was victorious in battle against the Persians, but soon after perished with his army in a morass fighting against the Goths. His successor was C. Vibius Gallus, who soon took up the

business of persecutor where his predecessor had left it. In his character was nothing to admire. He died a violent death: his soldiers assassinated him.

For a few subsequent years God's people had considerable quiet under Publius Licinius Valerianus. But ere long, about A. D. 257, began the EIGHTH general persecution. Valerian's mind became poisoned, it is said, through the influence gained over him by an Egyptian. It is probable also that some professed Christians committed indiscretions and showed too great fondness for the world, though there is no evidence that they plotted or perpetrated any crime. The end of this monster was dreadful. He waged war against the Goths, Scythians and Persians. The Persians captured him, carried him through their country as a spectacle, and at last, by the order of Sapor, king of Persia, he was flayed alive and his skin, tanned, was hung up in a Persian temple. This fearful end and the providence of God over the mind of his son and colleague, Gallienus, moderated

his ferocity, though he did not wholly stop the effusion of innocent blood. He was himself assassinated, A. D. 268.

The NINTH general persecution was begun by the emperor Aurelian, the son of an Illyrian peasant. He has been famous for his conquest of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, and infamous for his intended cruelties against the Christians and for his crimes against his own blood relations. He had prepared, but never actually signed, a decree of persecution against the Church. While meditating these awful calamities against his best subjects, God let loose the passions of Pagans against him. After reigning four years or less, he was assassinated A. D. 275. But during his reign, and under Tacitus and Florianus, the numbers of Christians who suffered imprisonment and who expected death was very great.

The TENTH and last general persecution bears the name of Dioclesian. Caius Valerius Dioclesian was of an humble family in Dalmatia. He became emperor A. D. 284. He chose as his colleague Galerius Valerius

Maximian, a Thracian shepherd. These united with them two others, Galerius and Constantius. These four men seemed to be just and mild, and for a considerable time were very prosperous in public affairs. At length success engendered pride, and pride is impiety. Dioclesian began his fearful course by requiring divine honours to be paid to him. This was soon followed by the sacking and demolishing of churches and by the burning of the Holy Scriptures. These acts were followed by persecuting decrees sent forth in rapid succession, until, in extent, terror and cruelty, there had been nothing in history like the Dioclesian persecution. Serena, the emperor's wife, herself became a victim. In every cruel form, for ten years together, these four men, with others like them, stained every part of the empire with the blood of the saints. Dioclesian lacked neither talent nor force of character, but all this made him the more dangerous enemy to the Church of God.

CHAPTER X.

LATER PERSECUTIONS.

SINCE these ten general persecutions there have been many horrible slaughters of the saints. It seems to be generally admitted that not less than a million of the Waldenses were put to death in France. Nearly as many orthodox Christians were slain in less than forty years after the establishment of the order of Jesuits. The Duke of Alva boasted that in his short career in the Low Countries he had caused thirty-six thousand to be put to death by the common executioner. And so it has been in all times of persecution. When the wolves have gotten among the flock, they have glutted a mighty raven ere they lay down to rest. Persecutors have no pity. There is no flesh in their heart. Like death and hell, they are never full. The United States of America

and Mexico do not this day contain as many souls as have been slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

There is a general impression in the Christian world that yet other bloody persecutions await the Church. This is probably correct. More than one prophecy of Scripture indicates that before the close of the present dispensation the passions of malignant men will be let loose in the direst manner to afflict the saints. But it is not germane to the object of this work to go at length into the consideration of prophecy.

Some have suggested that probably in the wasting of future persecutions God's people in America may be exempt from the fiery trials that shall come on the churches of the Old World. Perhaps this is rather a kind wish than a judgment founded on any teaching of Scripture. If the people of this country have not shed much of the blood of saints, they are in many cases the descendants of persecutors. The law of retribution is still in force. The causes which disturb the pas-

sions of men and arouse the malignity of mankind have, and will probably continue to have, as full sway and as fell swoop in America as in any other part of the world. Coming across the Atlantic is no cure for the enmity of the human heart against godliness and Christian simplicity. The combinations of the elements of wickedness are easily formed. Where men feel heart to heart the distinctions of birth, sect or nationality are easily set aside; and bad men, moved by a common impulse, are easily fused into a molten mass of spite and wrath, desolating everything in its track and burying whole provinces in indiscriminate ruin.

CHAPTER XI.

A REMARKABLE AND AUTHENTIC DOCUMENT.

PLINY'S LETTER TO TRAJAN.

CÆCILIUS SECUNDUS PLINY was the nephew of Caius Secundus Pliny, the philosopher, who wrote the Natural History, and lost his life A. D. 79, by making too near an approach to the crater of Vesuvius during an eruption. Cæcilius Pliny is commonly called Pliny the Younger. He had the best advantages of education, having Quintilian for his instructor. He was greatly esteemed for his general good character. He was a fine writer and a favourite of the emperor Trajan. He died A. D. 113. During the THIRD general persecution he was governor of Bithynia, and wrote to Trajan the following letter:

"C. PLINY TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN, wishes health.

"SIRE: It is customary with me to consult you on every doubtful occasion; for where my own judgment hesitates, who is more competent to direct me than yourself or to instruct me where uninformed? I had no occasion to be present at the examination of the Christians before I came into the province; I am therefore ignorant to what extent it is usual to inflict punishment or urge prosecution. I have also hesitated whether there should not be some distinction between the young and the old, the tender and the robust; whether pardon should not be offered to repentance, or whether the guilt of an avowed profession of Christianity can be expiated by the most unequivocal retraction; whether the profession itself is to be regarded as a crime, however innocent in other respects the prisoner may be; or whether the crimes attached to the name must be proved before they are made liable to punishment.

"In the mean time, the method I have pur-

sued with the Christians who have been accused as such has been this. I interrogated them, Are you Christians? If they affirmed, I put the same question a second and a third time, menacing them with the punishment decreed. If they still persisted, I ordered them to be immediately executed; for I did not doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that such stubbornness and obstinacy certainly deserved punishment. Some that were afflicted with this madness, because they were Roman citizens, I reserved to be sent to Rome, to be tried at your tribunal.

"In the discussion of this matter, accusations multiplying, a diversity of cases occurred. A list of names was sent me by an unknown accuser, but when I cited the persons before me, many denied that they were or ever had been Christians; and they repeated after me an invocation of the gods and of your image, which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought with the statues of the deities. They burned incense and offered libations of wine

to the gods, and blasphemed Christ; none of which things, I am assured, a real Christian can ever be compelled to do. Others, named by an informer, at first acknowledged themselves, and then denied it, declaring that though they had been Christians, they had renounced their profession some three years ago, others still longer, and some even twenty years ago. All these worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and execrated Christ.

"And this was the account they gave me of the nature of the religion they once had professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error: namely, that they were accustomed on a certain day to assemble before day, and to join in singing hymns to Christ as God; binding themselves as with a solemn oath not to commit any kind of wickedness; to be guilty neither of theft, robbery nor adultery; never to break a promise nor to defraud any man. Their worship being ended, it was their custom to separate, and meet together again for a repast, promiscuous indeed, and

without any distinction of rank or sex, but without any act of evil; and even from this they deserted since the publication of my edict, in which, agreeably to your orders, I forbade any societies of that sort.

"For further information I thought it necessary, in order to come at the truth, to put to the torture two maidens. But I could extort from them nothing but the acknowledgment of an immoderate superstition; and therefore desisting from further investigation, I determined to consult you; especially as the number of those who were in danger from your decree was great. Informations are pouring in against multitudes of every age, of all orders and of both sexes; and more will be accused, for this infection has crept not only into cities but also into villages, and even into farm-houses. Yet I think it may be checked; for in many places the temples of the gods, once almost desolate, now begin to be frequented, and from every quarter they bring sacrifices to be sold, whereas formerly very few were found willing to buy them.

From this I infer that many might be reclaimed if time and space were given them, and the hope of pardon on their repentance absolutely confirmed."

CHAPTER XII.

THE REPLY, WITH REFLECTIONS.

TO this letter Trajan replied:

"MY DEAR PLINY: You have done perfectly right in managing as you have the matters which relate to the impeachment of the Christians. No one general rule can be laid down which will apply to all cases. These people are not to be hunted up by informers, but if accused and convicted, let them be executed; yet with this restriction, that if any renounce the profession of Christianity, and give proof of it by offering supplications to our gods, however suspicious their conduct may have been, they shall be pardoned. But anonymous accusations should never be heeded, since it would be establishing a precedent of the worst kind, and altogether inconsistent with the maxims of my government."

Pliny's letter and the emperor's reply call for a few remarks:

1. The enmity of the human heart against God and his people is exceedingly dreadful. It balks at nothing. It is the same from age to age. It knows no bounds. In the populace it assumes the form of brutal rage; in the unprincipled it breaks out in clandestine informations; in the philosophic and generally humane it still persecutes even unto death. It is a deadly malice, a mortal hatred, seeking the utter extinction of true religion from the face of the earth. All infidels are in inclination pagans and persecutors. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is enmity against all that is called by his name or shows forth his glory, or preserves alive the memory of his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth and mercy. Its malice rages no less against a youth or a woman than against one of the stronger sex and in the prime of life. It despises the ties of nature, the bonds of affection. Jesus said it should be so. Matt. x. 21, 22; xxiv.

9–13; Luke xxi. 16, 17. Good men need trials, and therefore feel no surprise at outbursts of popular rage, nor at the schemes of cruel and cunning politicians for tormenting the saints. The ignorance and fierceness of the ungodly would swallow up all piety in a day if it were possible.

2. While a hypocritical pretence to piety, or a mere form of religion without its power, frequently passes unreproved, it is not possible for true vital godliness to escape the scorn or even bitter resentments of the wicked. A good confession of Christ is, after all, the greatest offence one can offer to a gainsaying world.

"I asked them, Are you Christians? If they avowed it, I put the same question a second and a third time; if they persisted, I ordered them to be immediately executed," says Pliny; and Trajan says, "You have done perfectly right." The offence of the cross has not ceased. Pure religion and undefiled is the greatest crime man can commit in the eyes of the ungodly and unsanctified. It was,

and again may be, a "capital offence for any one to avow himself a Christian."

3. It is clear, from this letter and from many monuments of antiquity, that in less than a century after the death of Christ his doctrine was extensively embraced and his followers were very numerous. The temples in Bithynia had become "almost desolate." Victims had nearly ceased to be brought thither for the want of purchasers.

While things went thus in one region, in Syria the spread of the truth seems to have been no less rapid. In a letter to Trajan, the governor Tiberianus says: "I am quite wearied with punishing and destroying, according to your order, the Galileans, or those of the sect called Christians. Yet they never cease to profess voluntarily what they are, and to offer themselves to death. Wherefore I have laboured, by extortions and threats, to discourage them from daring to confess to me that they are of that sect. Yet, in spite of all persecution, they continue still to do it." Indeed, from the beginning of the second

century to the time of Constantine, the simple withdrawal of the Christians from the empire would have left a "a hideous gap," an awful desolation, not only in some inconsiderable places, but in many famous cities and provinces. God's word ran very swiftly. Even in Paul's time "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Rom. x. 18.

4. Idolatry and true religion can never be reconciled. Fire and water are not more opposed. Idolatry stops at nothing. It addresses religious homage not only to gods many, supposed to be in heaven, but to bulls and cats and onions on earth. Not only the image of Jupiter, but the image of Trajan, must be worshipped. It multiplies the sorrows of all who hasten after it. It murders not only its enemies, but also its friends. Against such a system pure religion and undefiled must be antagonistic. It denounces all the pomp and pageantry of the most solemn rites of heathenism. It is utterly opposite to its doctrines, its morals and its

worship. The two can never agree. They are contrary the one to the other. Modern idolatry in power does as ancient idolatry practiced. It is as cruel and as devilish in Madagascar in the nineteenth century as in Rome in the first or second century.

5. We should not be surprised at apostasies. They are no novelty. The trials of successive ages vary in their form, sometimes being seductive and sometimes terrific, but poor human nature, if left to itself, can resist none of the assaults of the wicked. Seduction is often more potent than persecution. Demas seems to have withstood the latter, but to have been overcome by the former. False brethren have been found in the church in all ages. An apostle thus explains the whole matter of wilful apostasy: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John ii. 19. In every age apostasies have occurred. There have always been men

who wished to wear the crown, but could not bear the cross. "It is no new thing for men to desert the profession of the truth, to which they have formerly appeared to be attached, through the fear of man or the love of the world."

6. Pliny's letter shows that from the first Christianity was, as it is now, a pure system, and was so understood by those who heartily embraced it. Even torture could produce nothing to the damage of the blameless lives of the early Christians. They never committed theft, fraud or adultery. Their word was sacred. They never denied a trust. Such fruits heathenism had never borne. They are the product of Christian morals. Blessed are those professed followers of Christ who by well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and against whom the enemy can say nothing evil unless he say it falsely. Even apostates themselves said nothing worse of the character and doings of Christians than that one could not continue in good standing among them unless he led a holy life.

7. It also appears that the early Christians were of a quiet spirit, and even gave up for a time their public meetings in the day-time when they were by edict forbidden. They would not have their good evil spoken of. They quietly met before day, that they might not disturb the peace of neighbourhoods. And although they were so numerous that they could have made successful resistance by the sword, they never once resorted to violence, even in self-protection.

8. From earliest ages the divinity of Christ has been a fundamental doctrine received by all true Christians. The martyrs and confessors sung "hymns to Christ as God." They received him as their Lord, and worshipped him. This was the secret of all their power and intrepidity. Never would they have joyously died for Christ if he had not been to them all in all, the chiefest among ten thousand, the Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace. They worshipped him because they knew that as God he was with them,

even where two or three were met in his name.

9. In yielding their civil and social rights Christians may often go far, but they cannot yield their convictions—they cannot surrender their consciences. The governor and his creatures thought they required but little when they called on the Christians to repeat a few words of invocation to an image or to throw a little incense on the fire; but there was principle involved. Good men could die for Jesus, but they could not sacrifice or pray to idols. The dictates of conscience, enlightened by the word of God, cannot and ought not to be unheeded. We must obey God rather than men.

10. There are many reasons why Christianity is unpopular. One is, that it inflexibly maintains the unity of God, 1 Tim. iv. 10: "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God." Another is, that its author was hanged upon a tree, 1 Cor. i. 23. Another is that it spares no sin, no lust, but demands self-denial and

holiness of all, Matt. xvi. 24; xii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 15. Another is that it denies the possibility of salvation by any works or merits of the sinner himself; but points him to the righteousness of Christ as the sole and sufficient ground of acceptance with God, Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16; Rom. x. 4. To all these we must add that Christianity has always been exclusive, and has denied fraternity to any and every form of idolatry and of false religion. This is but carrying out in their true import the precepts of the first table of the law. The same objection was made to pure Judaism. Celsus tells the whole story: "If the Jews, on these accounts, adhere to their own law, it is not for *that* they are to blame; I rather blame those who forsake the religion of their own country to embrace the Jewish. But if these people give themselves airs of sublimer wisdom than the rest of the world, and on that score refuse all communion with it as not equally pure, I must tell them that it is not to be believed that they are more dear or agreeable to God than other nations."

Had the Christians merely proposed their creed as one of many systems which might be advantageously followed, and their Saviour as one of many whose favour might be supplicated, they would have incurred very little odium. It was the fact that their system claimed an exclusive divine origin, and regulated their conduct accordingly, that made Tacitus, when he wrote of the burning of Rome, call Christians "persons convicted of hatred to all mankind." He and thousands believed that it was a higher proof of love to let your neighbour alone in his sins, and to fraternize with him in his false worship, than it was to tell him the truth, give him faithful warning and refuse to be a partaker of his abominable idolatries.

11. The world has never understood the real principles and motives of God's people. Even Trajan and Pliny, with all their natural good sense and fine talents, misunderstood their whole character and behaviour. Stern and unbending integrity is commonly admitted to be a fine quality. Close adherence

to our enlightened convictions of right ought to command respect and even admiration. But the steadiness of the early Christians in adhering to their Master and his cause was regarded as a crime worthy of death. "I was persuaded," says Pliny, "whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly merited correction." And Trajan tells him he judged right. So they wrapped it up. If we may call all zeal, madness; all principle, absurdity; all firmness, contumacy; and all intrepidity, rashness and obstinacy, we can be at no loss for grounds on which to condemn all goodness on earth. The same blindness and perverseness which kept the world from rightly judging respecting Christ himself, perpetuate false judgments respecting his people. Acts iii. 17; 1 John iii. 1. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." This blindness is not the less criminal because it is natural, universal, and by human wit and power invincible. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Carnal men cannot understand spiritual things,

cannot rightly estimate holy motives and principles.

12. It is common for the wicked to persecute the righteous under false pretences—to find pretexts in something foreign from the Christian life and character. There is as much difference between firmness and obstinacy, between fortitude and contumacy, as there is between light and darkness, between vice and virtue. Because the Christians could not defile their consciences they were said to have the very spirit of rebellion against political authority. Then too they were held answerable for all the public calamities that befel the empire. Tertullian says, "If the city be besieged, if anything happen ill in the fields, in the garrisons, in the lands, immediately they cry out, *'Tis because of the Christians.* Our enemies thirst after the blood of the innocent, cloaking their hatred with this silly pretence, *that the Christians are the cause of all public calamities.* If the Tiber flows up to the walls; if the Nile does not overflow the field; if the heavens alter

their course; if there be an earthquake, a famine, a plague, immediately the cry is, Away with the Christians to the lions." The favourite slanderous charge against God's people is, that they are disaffected toward the government, because they announce unwelcome but seasonable truths, because they stand aloof from the fury of the masses, or dissent from the foolish and wicked course of those in power. Thus of Jeremiah it was said, "Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans," Jer. xxxvii. 13. Thus Amaziah sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying: "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to hear all his words." Amos vii. 10. Thus men accused Christ and his apostles. Pretences are never wanting to wicked and bloody men.

They know that nothing is more odious than unfaithfulness in the civil relations of life; and when they lack all true ground of accusation in this behalf, they invent some story, or frame some law, or devise some test which good men abhor, that in some way

they may enrage the populace, prejudice rulers and have their spite on the objects of their murderous malice, their diabolical envy.

13. It would be well, even in Christian countries, if all in authority would so far follow the example of Trajan as to refuse to pay attention to anonymous accusers, frown from their presence malignant and unprincipled slanderers, and, instead of hunting up informers and maligners, would cast the shield of public law over all well-disposed and quiet people who obey all the laws and quietly mind their own business.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MODERN MARTYR.

MODERN civilization has been sadly disgraced by both the spirit and practice of persecution. At the close of this book will be found a short list of books where may be found full accounts of these awful tragedies. One is here given as a sample of what human and diabolical malice will do, as also of what divine grace can enable its subject to accomplish. The intelligent will not wonder at the selection of

JOHN BRADFORD.

This faithful and eminent servant of Christ fell a victim to the malice and bigotry of Bloody Mary of England. She determined to establish popery in her dominions at any cost.

So powerful a preacher was he, and so desirous was the infamous Bonner, bishop of London, to induce him to return to the Romish Church, that more pains were taken with him and more patience exercised than with any other professor of the Reformed faith.

But the attempt was vain. Bradford held fast his confidence and the rejoicing of his hope, and in January, 1555, after being in prison eighteen months, he was tried for his refusal to submit to Romanism before Gardiner, Bonner and others, and condemned to the stake. He was kept in prison till July following. It was not intended to give him any notice of the day fixed for his death. "As he was walking in the keeper's chamber with John Leof, who suffered with him, suddenly," says Fox, "the keeper's wife came up as one amazed, and seeming much troubled, being almost breathless, said, 'Oh, Mr. Bradford, I come to bring you heavy news.' 'What is that?' said he. 'To-morrow,' she replied, 'you must be burned.'" This was sudden

indeed, but it did not take him at unawares. Fox adds, "With that, Mr. Bradford put off his cap, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, 'I thank God for it. I have looked for the same a long time, and therefore it cometh not to me now suddenly, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof.'"

Accordingly, next morning, he and young Leof were early led forth, a multitude thronging the way, who sympathized deeply with them; and some near relatives, who pressed forward to shake hands with and give a parting blessing to Bradford, were brutally used by the sheriff and his assistants.

When they came to the stake in Smithfield, they laid themselves down on the ground, "one on one side of it, the other on the other, praying to themselves the space of a minute;" in this they were interrupted by one of the sheriffs crying to them, "Arise, make an end, for the press of people is great."

They rose, and Bradford taking a fagot in his hand, kissed it and also the stake. He

then requested that his clothes might be given to his servant, for he had nothing else to give him. He put off his upper garment and went to the stake, saying, "O England, England! repent thee of thy sins, repent thee of thy sins!" He was stopped by the sheriff threatening to tie his hands if he would not be quiet. Turning to the people, he asked forgiveness of all, as he forgave all, and besought them to pray for him and his fellow-sufferer, to whom he said, "Be of good comfort, brother, for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night." Embracing the dry rods that were bundled round him, he cried, "Strait is the way and narrow the gate that leadeth to eternal salvation, and few there be that find it." Fire was set to the pile, and two precious lives were taken away.

Thus these holy men went up to glory in a chariot of fire.

CHAPTER XIV.

ROMANISM IN ROME.

BY A. B. C.

AN inside view of Romanism is not easily obtained, even at the metropolis of the papal empire. There are so many gates that are kept closed to a Protestant, and so many doors not easily opened to him; there are so much glare of gold and glitter of tinselry on the outside, and so many charms of music and fascinations of art; so much stained glass and "dim religious light," that between the dazzle and the darkness I began to fear lest my eyes might be so blinded as to be of small use to me.

But I rubbed them a little and bathed them in the clear water of the Divine Word, and, aided by my historical glass, I soon be-

gan to see more plainly, and to survey the Scarlet Lady in her interior character as well as external attractions.

I do not wonder that a superstitious, enthusiastic, voluptuous people should be Roman Catholic there at Rome—that any one, almost, should be with whom a taste for the fine arts transcends a love of the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor yet do I wonder that romantic girls and imaginative, would-be-poetic boys, on whom gospel truth has no firm hold, charmed by the free notions of this earthly enchantress, and the exalted ideas of antiquity, authority and infallibility which she inculcates, should be caught in the sweep of her rustling drapery.

All that art and wealth, all that dress and drapery can do, has been done for the Romish Church. It is vain, as well as sinful, for Protestants to enter the lists with her as rivals in these things. She has the advantage of accumulated treasures and of a thousand years' experience, and they cannot successfully compete with her. Their only hope

is in the counter-principles—simplicity, sincerity and truth. Light is more powerful than darkness, sincerity is mightier than ceremony—the Bible than the breviary.

In its principles and pretensions the Romish Church is to-day very much what it was five hundred years ago. It is mediæval still. Its organization is even more complete now than it was then, though relatively much feebler.

Two features impressed me very strongly in my study of the papacy at Rome:

Its three peculiar principles and its five chief institutions.

These give the clew to the exclusiveness, intolerance and persecution which for a thousand years have marked the history of Romanism.

Of its *principles*, that which lies at the foundation is its claim to be the only catholic and apostolic Church, and that salvation is not possible out of its pale. The practical inference from this assumption is, that it is nearly impossible for one to *fail* of salvation

who is in it. This principle, so sweepingly exclusive, necessarily makes the Romish Church intolerant and persecuting. It places her in direct and positive opposition to every other organization that claims to be a Church. And, the more fully its members accept this fundamental dogma of Romanism, the more likely are they to regard all means as lawful for extending the one and for exterminating the others.

The worth of the soul, and the importance of its salvation, serve only, on this principle, to intensify their zeal as proselyters. The Church of Rome, to them, is the only form of Christianity and the only way of salvation. The hope of the world is here, and there is none for it anywhere else. Nothing is of such moment as the extension of this Church, and the extermination of whatever co-ordinate claimants stand in its way. For men to be deluded by these rival organisms is certain and eternal ruin. Where the Church of Rome is not, there ignorance, error and all vices and crimes abound, and moral death

broods over men. But where its influence is unrestrained all these have gradually disappeared, and the light of science, of truth, and of eternal life have come most benignly to shine.

In this false faith bigotry seizes and incarcerates its victims and confiscates their property. Fanaticism lights its fagots and fans its fires for the glory of God and the diffusion of the gospel.

In an important sense the Church is a vast moral power. This is the truth contained in this Romish error, and is the source of its influence. But the Romish Church is not *the* Church, either exclusively or *par excellence*. The assumption of this is its error and the cause of its moral weakness. Falsehood is always weak, and must fail when truth fairly confronts it.

Another of those peculiar principles is its claim to *temporal power*.

Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Pope says, "*Mine is*." The Master gave to Peter the "keys," but his

reputed successor in the episcopal chair has taken the sword also. Pope Pius IX., in his last encyclical letter, says that "the apostolic see is based on the temporal power." He classes the idea that "the cessation of the temporal power would contribute to the happiness and liberty of the Church" among the principal errors of the times to be condemned and punished. And the grand council of two hundred and forty-five bishops, archbishops and patriarchs, which assembled in Rome in 1862, "affirm that the temporal sovereignty of the holy see is a *necessity*, and that it has been established by the manifest design of Providence." Therefore it must by all means be retained.

This necessity looks beyond the Church as a "pillar and ground of the truth" to a purely political force. As a spiritual organism, she can execute only spiritual pains and penalties. But by her temporal sovereignty, and through the political powers she controls, those who fall under her ban as heretics are executed as *criminals*. By this double action

of the Church, the State has long played the part of her menial. The pope has raised up kings and princes and cast them down again at his pleasure—has absolved their subjects from fealty and bound them to it, irrespective of the will of either subjects or rulers. Powerful monarchs have bowed at his gate, abjectly begging for the uplifting from them of his oppressive hand. He has fomented wars and declared peace. He has made treaties and violated them, enthroned kings and dethroned them, levied taxes, raised armies, established arsenals, built fortresses and supported navies.

But why does this chief feeder of Christ's flock need these temporal powers and this enginery of war? "For the good of the Church and the free government of souls," say the two hundred and forty-five chief papal dignitaries. "We do not hesitate to declare that, in the present state of human affairs, this temporal sovereignty is absolutely requisite for the good of the Church and the free government of souls!"—by fires and fagots, by imprisonment and tortures, by gibbets

and the gallows, by confiscations and auto da fés!

But did Christ, or did Peter, claimed as the first pope, possess or feel the need of this temporal power? Or did any of his successors at Rome for five hundred years possess it? And how was this power gained? History answers—her own history. Gradually and through successive popedoms, by chicanery, by simony, by fraudulent deeds of conveyance and false titles, by extortion, by wars and bloodshed.

And how has this triple-crowned monarch used this temporal sovereignty? In hunting and harassing, for nearly a thousand years, the saints of the Most High who have dissented from his dictum or doubted the dogmas of the cardinals; by persecuting the Cathari, the Lollards, the Begards, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Wickliffites and the Bohemians; by pursuing unto death the Reformers in Holland and Hungary, in France, in Germany and in England, both Lutherans and Calvinists.

In 1572, on St. Bartholomew's eve, in the reign of Charles IX., the Protestants were decoyed by the royal oath of safety to a wedding festival in Paris. The queen dowager of Navarre was there perfidiously poisoned, Admiral Coligny treacherously assassinated, and ten thousand Protestants—brave men, delicate women and helpless children—fell victims to the ruthless slaughter of a brutal soldiery. From Paris the furor extended to the chief cities of the kingdom, and from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand of the purest and noblest fell in this relentless massacre. And when the news of this horrible carnage reached Gregory XIII., the cannon of St. Angelo belched out the public joy, and bonfires illumined the papal city. A thanksgiving mass was performed in St. Mark's Church, and a jubilee from this dark centre was proclaimed throughout the Christian world.

But in the reign of Louis XIV. even this merciless butchery was far exceeded in infernal devices—tortures by burning-irons, by slow roasting, hanging by the feet and by

the hair of the head, plunging into deep wells, suffocating with smoke, piercing with pins, starving and shooting down like wild beasts. And Romish priests gloated over these outrages, and chanted the Te Deum in the midst of them, and Gloria in Excelsis!

"And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

"And I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

This is the use which the Romish Church makes of her temporal power—to enforce by the sword an external harmony where there is only internal discord. Is that a "free

government" whose chief function is to repress free thought, free speech and free worship? Is it a government "for the good of souls" that closes up from them God's word of life—that compels them to worship in a dead language—that deludes them with "lying wonders," and gives them two mediators where God has given but one—that changes a bit of bread into the body of God, and puts a priestly mass in the place of the divine sacrifice? Does the good of souls require a sword in the hand of the Church to enforce these dicta upon unwilling subjects? Yet this is theoretic Romanism and systematic persecution. And this is the philosophy of the whole question of temporal sovereignty.

It changes the great issue between the Church and the world. From one of faith it makes it, as a finality, one of force. Christ falls out of Christianity to make room for Cæsar—the Church drops her keys and grasps the sword. She withdraws the evangelists and apostles from the conflict, and relies on bullets and bayonets as the chief propagators

and defenders of the faith. When a Church appeals from the Bible to bulls and bombshells, from arguments to arsenals and armies, it ceases to act in the capacity of a Christian Church and becomes a mere civil power, and, for all purposes of ecclesiastical rule, a persecuting power.

It is a third fundamental principle of the Romish Church, discovered by this inside view, that heresy is a crime punishable with death.

This is abundantly maintained by her writers on criminal law and on Christian ethics and theology. And it is inculcated in all their principal institutions of learning and by all monastic orders.

Cardinal Bellarmine, the best of authorities on the subject, says:

"Heretics can justly be excommunicated, and therefore put to death. Knowing that fools will not be wanting who may believe them, and by whom they may be supported, if you confine them in prison or send them into exile, they corrupt the neighbourhood by their speeches and looks; therefore, the only

remedy is to send them forthwith to their own place."

"If the forgers of money," says Aquinas, another of these authorities, "or other malefactors, are justly consigned to immediate death by the secular princes, much more do heretics, immediately after they are convicted, deserve, not only to be excommunicated, but also justly to be killed."

In this third principle the two former come to a practical point. It is the keystone in the arch of this spiritual despotism. The pope, as supreme in the one only Church, holds the power of excommunication. But as a *temporal* sovereign he holds also the power to execute upon the excommunicant whatever penalty is judged best for the safety and aggrandizement of the papacy. This has been decided to be the death-penalty. Heretics ought to be excommunicated by the spiritual power and put to death by the temporal. But what is heresy? The pope, in his encyclical, answers: It is heresy to affirm that "the best condition of society is that in

which the power of the laity is not compelled to inflict the penalties of law upon the violators of the Catholic religion, unless required by public safety." This is the latest assertion of this obnoxious, persecuting power, and by the highest authority. It is vital still in Romanism, and cannot, "except by annihilation, die."

What is this "power of the laity?" It is the *temporal* power of the pope. It is the power of kings and all civil authorities and states, that are, or ought to be subject in this, to his rule. Who enacts the "law?" The pope and the cardinals. Not only at Rome, but throughout Italy, France and Spain, and also in Protestant England and the United States, everywhere and always, the civil powers ought to carry out the decrees of these mitred ecclesiastics, and hang, burn or exile the excommunicants of the Romish Church, not as bad subjects, but as violators of the Catholic religion. This is the arrogance of the triple-crowned prince of the Vatican and his scarlet-clad abettors, and this the humilia-

ting vassalage in which he *claims* that all the princes of the earth ought to yield themselves to him as the vicar of Christ.

The doctrine that "liberty of conscience and of worship is a right of every man," by the same high authority is pronounced a heresy and "a *delirium*," which the spiritual power punishes with excommunication, and the temporal in all nations ought to punish with death. In the purely Romish countries, kings and princes have long done this bloody work of the Church. And in Rome this Draconic law is supreme, the persecuting despotism complete.

To purchase and read the Bible or any other prohibited book, without a license, is an heretical act, and subjects the offender to excommunication and death. All "biblical societies" are classed in the appendix to his encyclical as "pests," and all who countenance them are held as "violators of the Catholic religion," on whom the "penalties of law" should be inflicted.

The imprisonment and exile, a few years

since, of Count Guiccardiani and his companions, at Florence, for reading the gospel of John, was a logically defensive necessity of the assumptive infallibility and supremacy of the Romish Church. Julian the Apostate, for the same reason, forbade to the Christians the study of heathen learning. "They wound us," he says, "by our own weapons; with our own arts and sciences they overcome us."

Here is the vital point in the present issues of the papacy. She must retain her political character, or lose her power of compelling the faith of men in her sovereignty. She must have executioners of her most exterminating sentence, or her empire and her grandeur are ended. Then would her fulminations have only the force of the truth that is in them. Fire and fagots and the sword would, in her pale, give place to free thought and free speech. She would be obliged to meet dissent with argument, light with light, and spiritual foes with only spiritual forces.

This she dreads. "I will listen," says the pope "to no more propositions modifying the

conditions of my temporal power." But in the year 1866, the great prophetic year for a downfall in Romanism, the emperor of France withdraws his troops from Rome, and the temporal sovereignty of the pope, sustained by falsehood and fraud, vanishes from the page of history.

More than half a century ago wrote Napoleon I.: "The interests of religion, as well as those of the people of France, Germany and Italy, all unite in compelling his majesty to put an end to this temporal power, the feeble remnant of the exaggerations of the Gregories and others, who claimed to rule over kings, to give away crowns, and to have the management of things of the earth as well as those of heaven."

He began the compulsory action, and his astute nephew—knighted as "Defender of the Faith" in Rome, on Christmas, 1850, in one of the grandest displays of the Church—has brought it to an end.

CHAPTER XV.

ROME A PERSECUTING POWER.

BY A. B. C.

OF the five chief institutions of Romanism, a full inside view can be secured only at Rome. They are all clustered here. This is the grand centre. The heart of the system is here, and these institutions are its arterial organization.

"As St. Peter vanquished the first heresiarchs on no other spot than Rome," said the old Dominican inquisitor Caraffa, "so must the successor of St. Peter overcome all the heresies of the world in Rome." Everywhere else, from the intelligence of the people or the tolerance of another faith, it meets with hindrances to its full operation.

1. Here, the *sovereign pontiff*, with his triple crown, sits on his golden throne, the

despotic and infallible head of the Church militant. Pius IX., at first, would have been a reformer had reform been practicable. His accession was hailed by the Italians as the dawn of a brighter day. He introduced some constitutional elements into the government. He granted a chamber of deputies and a lay ministry. But the cardinals saw the tendency, and resisted him. They arrested legitimate measures which arose in the chamber, and overrode the ministry. The crisis gave him an opportunity to relax the oppressive rule of the Romish Church, and to signalize himself in the progress of civil and religious liberty. It was in his heart to do so. But he lacked courage. He was not the man for his time, and he fled from a people that then loved him as intensely as they afterward hated him. He refused their repeated invitations to return and carry on a government of his own projecting; and he employed a foreign soldiery to bombard his way back to a throne on which he has since sat, firmly or feebly, according to the number

of alien troops by which he has been surrounded.

What a spectacle! The professed vicegerent of Him who said, "My kingdom is not of this world," battling in blood for a temporal dominion! The assumed representative of the Prince of Peace maintaining his sway at the point of the bayonet and in seas of blood!

2. Here is the *college of cardinals*, that rearguard of *absolutism*, that impure junto of misanthropy, tyranny and sensuality. It numbers seventy when full, fifty-six of whom are cardinal priests, twenty-four cardinal deacons and six cardinal bishops. The pope appoints the cardinals, and they in turn elect the pope, and act as his counsellors at home and legates abroad. They assist him in the celebration of mass, and one officiates as his prime minister. Nominally, they are subject to him, but in reality they are his rulers.

Examples of nobleness and philanthropy, doubtless, there are among them. But according to common fame and reliable testi-

mony, these are the exceptions. The revolution of 1848 brought several of them, for a time, under the protection of our Minister at Rome, and into the familiar interchanges of thought and feeling, disclosing a social and moral debasement the farthest removed from what the Gospel requires in its teachers, and which would blast the fame of any Christian minister in our land.

3. The *Propaganda di Fide*, founded by Gregory XV. in 1622, and further endowed by Urban VIII., is also at Rome. It is situated at the southern extremity of the *Piazza di Spagna*. Its annual income at the close of the last century was three hundred thousand Roman crowns. Its printing-office was one of the finest in the world, with type for publishing in twenty-seven languages.

The French Revolution swept over it, and its pupils were scattered, its funds appropriated to other purposes and its founts of type carried to Paris. In 1818 the college was reopened, and it now numbers from seventy to a hundred choice students.

The scholastic dress is a long black cassock, bound with a red girdle, and two broad ribbons hanging from the shoulders behind. The students are entirely supported by the institution, even to the expense of travel to Rome and back to their native country. Each one in return gives a pledge that he will devote his life to the dissemination of the Catholic faith.

At the annual exhibition in 1851 parts were performed in fifty different languages. This institution presents an illustration of some of the comprehensive educational principles of Romanism. It disdains the odious distinctions of *color* which prevail in some branches of the Protestant Church. The blackest Ethiopian stands here on a level with the fairest of the Anglo-Saxon or the Latin race. It collects the materials upon which it works from every nation, tribe and tongue, and stimulates them to the greatest zeal and energy by the highest admiration and praise.

The Propaganda is the great heart of the

whole masterly missionary system of the papacy. By the multiform orders of monks and nuns, as through so many arteries and veins, noiselessly it sends out and receives back its vital fluid. The whole world is distinctly mapped out in its halls, and the chief points of influence minutely marked. A kind of telegraphic communication is established with the remotest stations in South Africa and Siberia, and with almost every nook in our own land, to which the myrmidons of papal power look with the most of hope, and also the most of fear. It is through means of this modern galvanic battery, set up in the Vatican, that the Church of Rome has gained its power of *ubiquity*—has made itself wellnigh omnipotent as well as omnipresent.

The same forestalling, stimulating principle is applied in the training of monastic *females*. At vespers, one Sunday evening, in the Church *Trinita di Monte*, I witnessed a service by the "white nuns," illustrating this feature of Romanism.

They were girls, from eight to sixteen, with blue frocks and white veils falling upon the shoulders behind and nearly to the feet. They entered the church from the adjoining convent in a procession of two and two, approached the altar, slowly bending the knees almost to the floor, and bowing in graceful homage to the picture of the Virgin. Then rising they turned, each to the opposite side of the space, knelt again, rose and seated themselves. The service consisted of chantings and responses, genuflections and demonstrations, after which the nuns retired, bowing to the altar as when they entered. In all these ecclesiastical gymnastics they had been trained to the utmost exactness and gracefulness of manner.

But why are these girls, at this tender age, taken out of the family relations, and foredoomed to a life with which they can have no natural affinities? Why this unseemly haste to bind them to this single and repulsive life? God made man male and female, and in the unity of this dualism is developed

the whole humanity. The Church of Rome, in respect to the clergy, contravenes this primal order. Not a few of the ills which afflict fair Italy arise from this initial vice of Romanism—the *celibacy of the priests*. They are the teachers and rulers of the land. But they are not allowed the family ties of husband and father, and consequently lose the humanizing, elevating influences which God has connected with these hallowed relations.

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4. Another characteristic institution of the Romish Church, which has its centre at Rome, is the *Company of Jesus*, or the Jesuits. The general of the order resides at Rome, wielding a sceptre second in power only to that of the pope. To the three vows of poverty, chastity and monastic obedience, common to other orders, Loyola added a fourth, peculiar to the members of his society. It was the vow of obedience to the *pope* in the service of the Church, without charge for their support. This procured them their institution from Paul III. in 1540. In nine

years they acquired a superiority to all human control, except that of the pontiff.

The constitution of the society is essentially military and most rigidly despotic, all power being lodged with the general. In his hands all are to be as "a staff," or "as a dead body." It was the boast of Ignatius that he wished for only one month to secure this conquest. The achievement is accomplished by means of a manual called the "Spiritual Exercises." "These," says Father de Ravignan, "have created the society, maintain it, preserve it and give it life." Hence this book is placed at the threshold of the order.

The victim sits and stands, and sighs and groans, and weeps and reflects, and prays, all by a prescribed rule. In this way he is broken to the will of the ghostly father. The *man* is then lost in the order. Every power of body and mind wears its chains. His last act of freedom is his choice of this perpetual bondage. Says Loyola, "If the authority declares that which seems to you white is black, affirm that it is black."

From the life of free thoughts and free words, and of an advancing Christianity, men are thus taken into the close atmosphere of the tombs, to be as corpses among the dead. The order is a complete despotism over the mind, conscience, will and estates of its members. Espionage and inquisitions reign in all grades and offices of the company, except the highest. All are watched by all; and all give account to the general of the order, who gives account to none.

5. Finally, the central enginery of the *Inquisition* still works with a secret though somewhat abated malignancy. This is the main defensive expedient of the papacy, devised by Innocent III. in the twelfth century for the conviction and punishment of heretics, and renewed at the Reformation. Its processes are all secret as the grave, and its cells full of dead men's bones. Within the enclosures of this "Court of Death," are kept the "iron shears" of this infallible Church, with which she is wont to pare the faith of men into agreement with her canons

and her catechism. Here is the statue of the blessed Virgin, with her spike bosom and her iron arms, with which this step-mother was wont to receive her wayward children to her fond embrace. Here, too, are the huge "keys" of St. Peter, and the deep dungeons and massive doors within which she locks up poor temptation-tried pilgrims, to keep them unspotted from the world.

Behind all, upon his bloody throne, sits the dark-visaged inquisitor. His "bones are marrowless," his blood "is cold," he has "a lean and hungry look," and is filled "top-full of direst cruelty." For this inhuman work a laic must not be taken, for he may have some social bands or some "dregs of conscience, some milk o' human kindness," which may make him a coward.

At its reinstitution in 1542, six cardinals constituted the first court, as Inquisitors General; of whom Caraffa and Toledo were the chief. Its powers were absolute, save the right of pardon reserved to the pope. By its rules no respect was to be shown to "prince

or prelate," to age or sex. The suspected were followed by the utmost rigour of prosecution.

The fourth rule forbids any sort of tolerance towards heretics, and especially toward Calvinists. Children are compelled to be informers against parents, and parents against children, husbands against wives, and wives against husbands. The Duchess of Ferrara, except for the Salic law heiress to the throne of France, was accused by her own husband, and shut out from all sympathy. "The mountains are between her and her friends," said her keeper; "she mingles her wine with tears."

Thus the most concealed germ of free thought is hunted out of society and of the soul by the disguised or open emissaries of the inquisition. "Dishonour of the reason," says Schiller, "and the murder of the soul constitute its vows. Its instruments are terror and disgrace. Every passion is in its pay, and its snares lie in every joy of life. Even solitude is not secure from its espionage, and the fear

of its omnipresence holds freedom fettered, even in the depths of the soul. All the instincts of humanity it has trodden down under the feet of credulity, and to it have been made to yield all those bonds which men esteem holiest. All claims upon his race are, for the heretic, disallowed. For, by the least infraction of the law of Mother Church, he has destroyed his humanity. A modest doubt as to the infallibility of the pope is esteemed parricide. Even the lifeless body of the heretic is cursed. No destiny can rescue its victims, and the grave itself is no refuge from its terrible arms."

During the revolution in 1848 the doors of this infernal institution were torn open, and its mysteries of iniquity disclosed to the gaze of an indignant humanity. In the Chamber of Archives were piled up the records of its dark proccedings. Over the door to one apartment was written, "No one enters this room except on pain of excommunication." It was the Judgment Hall, where the fate of thousands has been sealed

by the diabolical inquisitors. In an adjoining room was found a trap-door, through which the condemned passes into eternity. The pit is cylindrical in form and eighty feet deep, within which the terrific engines of death performed their demoniacal work.

The strictest literary censorship, which is a part of the criminal jurisprudence, is extended by the inquisitors to every department of science, archæology, philosophy, history, political economy and theology. No original investigation is tolerated divergent from the prevalent orthodoxy. In 1543, Caraffa ordered that no book, whatever its contents, whether old or new, should be printed without permission from the inquisitors. All booksellers were required to submit a catalogue of their stock, and a few years after an index of forbidden books was published and still continues to be.

In 1851, I copied the following decretum from the door-post of St. Peter's, with an appended list of prohibited books:

"A Decretum of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Roman Church of Cardinals by

our most holy Lord, Pius IX., in which we have condemned and will condemn, have proscribed and will proscribe, the following works."

Then comes a list of the books, among which are—

A Historical Analysis of Christian Civilization.

Mysteries of the Inquisition and other Secret Societies of Spain.

Letters on the Egyptian Hieroglyphics.

"No one shall dare to publish, read or keep in any place or idiom, any one of these condemned books, under the penalties stated in the 'Index of Vicious Books.'"

"That a book, in worse condition than a peccant soul," said John Milton, "should be made to stand before a jury ere it be born to the world, and undergo, yet in darkness, the judgment of Rhadamanth and his colleagues, ere it can pass the ferry backward into light, was never heard before till that mysterious iniquity, provoked and troubled at the first entrance of reformation, sought out

new limbos and new hells, wherein they might include our books also within the number of their damned."

But there is one object on which these mitred ecclesiastics look with more intense anxiety than upon any other. They fear it more and hate it more. It is the Bible. This they regard as the fomenter of all their difficulties. This occasions agitations and discussions among the people, and kindles in them dangerous desires to think for themselves, and to know what God teaches. Here are the seeds of free schools and free thoughts, a free press and a free government. The Bible has made England and America free. Hence the Romanists proscribe it and burn it, and exile, incarcerate or burn those who read it.

The massive strength of the Romish hierarchy is found in the great institutions of which we have taken a glimpse—the Papal See, the College of Cardinals, the Propaganda di Fide, the Order of Jesus and the Inquisition. It involves the highest constructive skill, and is the fruit of twelve hundred years

of experiments. But just here too, is its weakness; because mere human sagacity is always weak, and must, in the end, prove futile against Divine Providence and the Bible.

In a certain mythology of the ancients, the heavens are supported by the earth, the earth by an elephant, the elephant by a turtle, while the turtle stands on his own feet. By a similar series of supports the Inquisition stands on the Propaganda, the Propaganda on the cardinals, the cardinals on the pope, and the pope on nothing.

As a spiritual despotism it must remain as it is or fall. *Reform* is impracticable. Luther and Melancthon sought this earnestly, boldly, but ineffectually. They did not break from the Church until, for their efforts at reform, she cut them off as guilty of damnable heresy. Then the die was cast. They must protest and fight for the truth, or perish.

The papal anathema roused the Saxon monk. "You will burn *me*," he says, "for answer to the God's message which I strive

to bring you. I take your bull as a parchment lie, and burn *that*." And, proceeding with it to to the east gate of Wittemburg, he kindled a fire which illumined the whole North of Europe. "Confute me by proofs of Scripture," said he, "at the Diet of Worms, or else by plain, just argument, otherwise I cannot recant. Here I stand—I can do nothing else, God help me!"

Thus the battle commenced—the great battle of Armageddon, of truth against error, light against darkness, Christ against Antichrist. At this point the papacy closes the breviary, and

"Opes the bleeding testament of purple war."

To the side of truth and freedom gather the faithful and the free from every clime. They are inspired by the voices of the slain witnesses under the altar, saying, "How long, Lord God Almighty, shall we not be avenged?" And their final victorious requiem shall be in the language of the Seer of Patmos,

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.

"For her sins have reached into heaven, and God hath rewarded her iniquities."

"Alas! alas! that great city Babylon; that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."

CHAPTER XVI

LOUIS MONTREVEL, OR THE HUGUENOT MARTYRS.

BY MITA LAUDER.

A SERENE Sabbath in June. The sun looks down calmly from his sapphire throne upon beautiful France, now bleeding with the bitter persecution of God's people—the despised Huguenots. There, in his pleasant light, stands the little village of Mirecourt.

A neat temple nestles in the foliage, and through the quaint old streets, and across the little green squares, and past the rows of freshly-trimmed shade trees, are walking a goodly company in holiday attire. There are old men in small clothes, with shining knee-buckles and three-cornered hats, and young men in gay waistcoats and glittering breast-

pins. There are peasant women in black jackets, short scarlet petticoats and tall, clear-starched muslin head-dresses; and pretty grisettes in coquettish black silk aprons and jaunty lace caps; while children of all sizes are scattered here and there, as buds among the flowers. Only a small number of faces peep out from bonnets, for in this little district there are not many families of wealth.

One of these few bonneted women would instantly have attracted your attention; she was slightly below the middle age, with a calm, pale face and soft hazel eyes. By her side, with a hymn-book in his hand, is a tall, erect man of benevolent countenance. Before her walks a fine-looking lad of eighteen, leading two little girls, and behind her two round-faced boys, who might have been, the one twelve and the other fourteen years of age. This group constitutes the Montrevel family, one of the most respectable in the place and universally beloved.

All these people, from different directions, are drawing toward one point—the modest

church hidden among the trees. When the Montrevel family approached the entrance, Louis drew back the little girls for his parents to precede him, and then following with his brothers, they all passed in and sat down on one of the benches, Louis helping his twin sisters to mount a seat each side of him. A pleasant sight it was to look upon monsieur and madame with their little flock, and many an eye dwelt kindly on the flaxen curly-haired Agnes and Marie.

The introductory services are over, and the aged pastor rises to announce his text:

"*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*"

As he stands there, his silver locks flowing over his shoulders, and his mild blue eye lighted with heavenly fire, a ray of light falling on his forehead crowns him with an aureole, likening him to one of the old pictured saints of Fra Angelico.

"My dear children," he says, "we must all abide as did the Israelites, with our sandals

on, our loins girded and our lamps trimmed and burning. Our lot is cast in a comparatively obscure part of the Lord's vineyard. And as yet we have known but little of the terrible sufferings our brethren and sisters have endured since the revocation of King Henry's edict. But when the bitter cup comes to us, as come without doubt it will, may we drink it submissively! I pray that in the day of adversity not one of my dear flock may be left to deny his Master."

Hardly had he uttered these words when the distant sound of cavalry sent a shudder through the assembly, for the poor Huguenots had good reason to know what this portended.

"I will look unto the hills whence my help cometh," said the good man, lifting up his eyes to heaven. Then extending his arms toward his beloved people, he continued:

"Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

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More and more distinct grew the tramp of the horsemen, and in spite of Father Legarme's cheering words the people were greatly agitated. Some fled in terror, while others huddled together at the foot of the altar.

On came the dragoons—dashing with savage yells through the quiet streets, across the green sward—on toward that temple of sincere worshippers. In less time than it has taken to describe the scene the Lord's house is filled and surrounded. Mounting the pulpit, his sword clattering on the stairs, the captain unrolled a parchment with its large seals of state, and read a proclamation, the substance of which was that his royal majesty had appointed dragonnades for the recovery of all heretics to the Most Holy Catholic Church.

"In accordance with this proclamation," he continued, "you are all hereby summoned to repair to the cathedral, where the priests who accompany the regiment will receive your recantation; and afterward you will celebrate the mass. If any refuse to obey, upon them will the dragoons be quartered."

Then addressing the soldiers with a shout, "Now, men, to your work!" there followed a scene of indescribable terror and distress. Some fled; others were dragged through the streets into the cathedral, up to the very altars, while a few, sorely tempted, hastily signed their abjuration, to repent of it ever after.

The houses of the recusants were filled with these emissaries of the Church. All the torments that human or satanic ingenuity could devise were made use of to force back these wanderers to the arms of their cruel mother. The poor victims were hung up by their feet or the hair of their head; and as if that were not enough, were at the same time nearly suffocated by the burning of damp straw in their cells. They were plunged into water and drawn out with a bare escape from drowning. Strong drink was poured down their throats through a funnel till they were intoxicated, in which condition they were induced to recant. By the ceaseless vigilance of sentinels, for a whole week at a time they were prevented from securing one minute's sleep.

Women were cruelly disfigured in the face, and dragged through the streets by the hair of their heads, and otherwise shamefully maltreated. Thus in every possible way were they harassed and tortured, while, if they attempted to flee the country, they were pursued, and if caught punished as malefactors. But the refinement of these cruelties was the tearing from the arms of their parents children of the tenderest age, and committing them to the charge of that cold-blooded stepmother —the papacy.

Upon the Montrevel family had been quartered thirty of these remorseless dragoons—an infliction, in comparison with which the Egyptian plagues were a dispensation of mercy. There seemed to be no species of wanton or brutal violence which these holy "booted missionaries" omitted from their means of grace for the conversion of heretics. After various ineffectual efforts with Monsieur Montrevel, one of these fiends exclaimed with an oath, "You shall swallow the host," and opening his mouth with a bayonet, another

of the hellish crew put in the host, which together they forced down his throat.

As Louis, the eldest son, witnessed this atrocious act, he started to rush upon the monsters, but an appealing look from his mother and the recollection of his own impotence arrested his motion. At this moment, a Jesuit father, entering, angrily addressed the heretic.

"We will yet find means to overcome your obstinacy;" and nodding to the ruffians, he added, "take him away."

As they were dragging him from the room, he cast a parting glance at his wife and son, saying, "Remember the promise, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'"

To make sure of the lambs, these ravening wolves then proceeded to tear from the broken-hearted wife her two younger sons and the pretty twins, little Agnes and Marie, whose pleas to stay with their dear mamma might have moved a heart of stone.

Late the same day, as the dragoons, half

drunk, had thrown themselves down to sleep, Louis went out to draw water. Hastily following, his mother beckoned him into the granary.

"Ah, my son, you must leave me instantly."

"I cannot, dear mother."

"There is no help for it, Louis. Your father will be murdered, and the little ones are all torn from me. But you may live to serve the dear Master. You will find means to escape to Holland and then to England, where, it may be, you can prepare yourself to be a minister of the blessed gospel. Perhaps some of your friends will go with you; but there must be no delay. And here is a little money for you."

As Louis still hesitated, she added, earnestly;

"For you to remain is torture and death, or, worse still, the dreadful galleys. For you will not forswear your religion."

"Never, unless God forsakes me."

"Then farewell, my precious child. And may God bless you!"

Louis hastily flung himself on his mother's

neck, and without another word set forth on his exile. As he came to a bend in the road, he turned and took a last glimpse of his beloved home. How attractive it looked in the sunset-light, with its pleasant parterre, its nice gravel-walks, its neat rows of trees, and that indescribable air that invests home with such a sacred charm!

"It will soon be in ruins," he mournfully exclaimed. But choking down his grief, he went on his way.

Two of his friends, Andrew and Henry Oster, lived with an uncle who was a Catholic, and whose house, consequently, was free from the hated dragoons. Being one of the easy sort, he did not molest his heretical friends, and if he happened to meet either of the boys carrying provisions away, was discreetly silent. They were, in fact, carried to a secret cavern, where a few families, having managed to elude the vigilance of the spies, had hid themselves, taking with them their beloved pastor, Father Legarme.

Mr. Oster had this very day assured

Andrew and Henry that there was no safety for them but in flight. So Louis found them prepared.

"And let us try to get off Father Legarme too, for these wretches pour out their hottest vials on the ministers."

Leaving the friends on their way to the cavern, we will go back to the home from which Louis had been driven forth, and where Madame Montrevel remained alone with the ruthless invaders. Innumerable cruelties were practiced upon her to make her renounce her religion. But in vain. Having consumed all the provisions that had been stored up, pillaged the premises of everything valuable and demolished the house even to the foundation, the savages dragged the faithful woman before the Duke de la Pontiac.

"She *shall* submit!" exclaimed the duke, enraged at her obstinacy.

And ordering pen and paper, one of his zealous servants seized her hand and compelled her to sign her abjuration.

"My Master will pardon this offending

hand," said she, looking the duke calmly in the face, "for my heart is not guilty of this base denial."

Is it possible, we are constrained to ask, that the most bigoted zealot should have attached any weight to such conversions? Yet most of the converts reported so triumphantly to the king were of this description. It does not surprise us that the good queen of Sweden, though a devoted adherent of the papacy, should write as she did to the French ambassador at Stockholm:

"I will frankly avow that I am not quite persuaded of the success of this great design; and that I cannot rejoice at it as an affair very advantageous to our holy religion. Military men are strange apostles. I consider them more likely to kill, to ravish and to plunder than to persuade; and, in fact, accounts beyond doubt inform us that they fulfil their mission entirely in their own mode. I pity the people abandoned to their discretion. I sympathize with so many ruined families; so many respectable persons reduced

to beggary, and I cannot look upon what is now passing in France without compassion."

And to the Cardinal Azolino she feelingly exclaims:

"I am overwhelmed with grief when I think of all the innocent blood which a blind fanaticism causes daily to flow. France exercises without remorse or fear the most barbarous persecution upon the dearest and most industrious portion of her people. . . . . Every time I contemplate the atrocious torments which have been inflicted upon the Protestants, my heart throbs and my eyes are filled with tears."

Even Madame de Maintenon, that zealous renegade from Protestantism, frankly admitted, "I think that all these conversions are not sincere; but at least the children will be Romanists."

* * * * *

Louis Montrevel and his two young friends failed to persuade Father Legarme to share their flight.

"My poor services belong to my scattered flock."

"But the horrid wolves will scent you out and devour you," exclaimed Andrew, impetuously.

"Not before God's time, my son. And if I am accounted worthy of a martyr's death, he will carry me through it."

Having exhorted the lads to remain true to their faith, whatever trials they might encounter, the good pastor prayed fervently with them, and then, having received his parting benediction, they set out on their journey.

Poor Louis was sadly cast down:

"I feel as if I had done wrong in leaving my mother."

"But the brutes would have torn you from her. Oh how I wish the lightning would blast them!"

"Hush, Andrew! have you forgotten how the disciples were rebuked for wishing to call down fire from heaven?"

"But I can't help hating the wretches, and what is more, I don't want to."

"Christ did not hate his persecutors," said Louis.

"Well, maybe it's wrong, and yet I don't see how flesh and blood can do any better. It's all sham, the pretended zeal of the dragoons—or dragons, as they ought to be called. I wonder if poor France will ever be free from her oppressors? Oh that we had a father William to fight our battles for us, as those Dutchmen had!"

Looking round to discover why Louis did not reply, he saw the tears rolling down his cheeks.

"My sweet little Agnes and Marie!" was his explanation. "How they will grieve themselves to death! The dear boys too—and my noble father and mother. How can I bear it?"

"Cheer up," said Henry, "for there's no knowing what may happen. We may have another king who will restore our edict, and then what a flocking in there will be from all quarters! But, Andrew, suppose we shouldn't get off, after all?"

"The galleys perhaps," replied his brother, with a shudder.

"We could, both of us, bear that better than Louis, for we have roughed it more and are stouter than he."

"Our heavenly Father can give us strength to endure," said Louis; "let us ask his help."

And kneeling down in the woods, they earnestly implored divine strength and guidance.

On reaching Paris, the boys found shelter for the night in a Huguenot family in the outskirts of the gay city.

"If you can only escape the notice of the guards," said their host, as his wife was putting up a lunch for the travellers, "and once set your feet in Charleroi, you will be under the protection of the Dutch garrison. There's no knowing how soon the rest of us will have to flee. But keep up, lads, for we shall reach heaven all the sooner for our persecutions, and thank God there'll be no dragoons there!"

Cordially shaking hands with their host

and hostess, the boys once more set forth on their exile. They had not travelled many hours before they caught the sound of distant troops. Leaping the hedges, they had no sooner reached a place of concealment in the woods than a company of dragoons rode furiously by. It was not till long after the last sound of the retreating horsemen had died away that they ventured again into the high road. They also encountered other perils, in which their presence of mind alone saved them.

"I wish we dared sing," said Louis, "for I am sure it would keep up our spirits."

"We can recite hymns, any way," replied Henry, "and that is next best."

"I have no memory of that sort," observed Andrew, "but I will be your attentive audience."

So Louis and Henry took turns in reciting Huguenot hymns, while Andrew performed the part of listener.

"I always loved those hymns," he said, "but somehow they seem sweeter than ever before."

"So they do to me," responded Louis, "and I suppose it is because we are in circumstances to feel the need of the consolations they breathe. I think we should also find passages of Scripture more precious, for the same reason. Let us make the experiment."

Having repeated a number of verses, they proceeded to talk of their early life.

"This is delightful," said Henry, "even if we are exiles."

"The more delightful on that very account," replied both the boys in the same breath.

"I think we had better consult a little about our plans," said Louis. "What do you mean to do, boys, if we get safely out of France?"

"I am going to learn some trade," replied Andrew.

"And I have yet to decide," said Henry, "whether I shall be a farmer or merchant. But you, Louis?"

"I mean to be a minister, as my mother always desired."

With the mention of that beloved name he

was suddenly overcome, and for a time no one broke the silence. But at length Andrew said:

"I dare say your mother will be one of your hearers when your hair is as white as Father Legarme's, and you lean over the desk as he does, as if ready to take all your flock to your bosom. Dear, good man! I wonder if we shall ever see him again?"

"Certainly, we shall—in heaven, if not before."

Thus beguiling the way, they travelled on in fancied security. Stopping to lunch, they heard some travellers discussing the dragoons.

"I hear they are at La Platte on their missionary work," remarked one of them with a sneer.

"Yes," replied the other, "and woe to those whom they catch trying to escape!"

Now the boys knew that La Platte was near the boundary-line, and that it was a town they were to pass through in approaching Charleroi. In a sudden alarm they concluded to deviate from their intended route, and

approach their place of destination by a circuitous road.

Fatal decision! which even before the day was through they began to regret.

"I fear we have been very foolish, and only put our heads into the lion's mouth," said Andrew, after they had walked some time in silence. "Did you observe that ill-favoured man that looked at us so sharply while we were lunching this morning?"

"That I did; and I have been afraid of encountering him ever since."

Entering a hostelrie, they were seized with a dismal foreboding on beholding that same ugly face appearing at another door. But they concealed their alarm, and called for supper and lodging, meaning to escape in the night. They were just partaking of their frugal meal when the dreaded man, who had stepped out, reappeared, accompanied by four gendarmes, and pointing to the lads, they were speedily arrested and brought before the governor, who, after a brief examination, committed them to prison. Sending to Paris for

orders, he received a rescript requiring them to be brought to trial, not only for heresy, but also for being found on the frontiers without a passport. It contained directions, however, that the curé should labour for their conversion, and, if successful, that they should be pardoned and sent home.

The officer to whose charge they were committed, though a Catholic, did not believe in persecution. Reporting to his prisoners the rescript, he added:

"Now, boys, your own consciences must be your guide. All I have to say is, that if you recant you will be pardoned; but if not, you will probably be sent to the galleys."

"Come what may, we will never betray our faith," answered Louis, without a moment's hesitation.

"Then the Lord be merciful to you!"

The following morning the curé commenced his pious labours. But it did not take him long to discover that, whatever arguments he might advance, the boys invariably managed to get the better of him. The oftener he was discomfited,

however, the greater became his desire for success. For he reasoned within himself:

"These boys have so much pluck that if they were only on the right side, they could argue down multitudes of heretics as I can never do."

Besides, he had become really interested in them, particularly in Louis.

"It's of no use to discuss any longer, for the rogues have used me up. And they've read all my books; no, they haven't," he exclaimed, as a sudden thought flashed on him, "for there's the very best of them they haven't even looked at."

And a smile dawned on his face as he thought of its fair pages. After pondering a few moments in silence, he broke out:

"Yes, yes, that will do it; and if one yields, all will. She has become greatly interested in their conversion from hearing my reports. And I'll set out the case in the morning so as to move her feelings. I don't see any objection to the scheme. The Montrevel family is very respectable, and Louis

is a handsome fellow, and a good one too, as one can easily see, in spite of his damnable heresy. And for that his parents are more to blame than he."

So he went to sleep with his head full of this new and subtle style of argument.

The next day the officer ushered into their cell a young and pretty girl, bearing a basket of grapes from her uncle, the curé.

"Sit down and talk with these prisoners a bit," said the officer, "for they are separated from their friends, and know not what is to befal them."

The damsel had a tender heart, and, though a devout Catholic, she pitied these misguided heretics. So in a friendly way she began to ask questions, happening first to address Andrew.

"My brother and I are orphans," the lad replied, "and have no brothers or sisters; but Louis has left a great many friends, besides two of the sweetest little sisters you ever saw."

"Tell me about them, please."

And as Louis, touched by her interest, was

drawn to speak out of a full heart, she sat listening with flushed cheek and tearful eyes:

"Oh, that I could persuade you to return to the Mother Church!"

"Do you think the means she is employing particularly suited to win us?"

"I cannot tell. I always shudder when I hear about the dragonnades, but uncle says it is what God requires."

"But we don't believe in such a God."

Louise crossed herself quickly: "I shall say prayers for you to our holy Mother."

"And on our part," exclaimed Louis, warmly, "we will entreat the Lord Jesus Christ to lead you into that truth for which we are ready to die."

"But you must not. I cannot believe the blessed Virgin requires such a sacrifice. How I wish Father La Sallier were here, for he is more learned than my uncle, and I think he could convince you of your errors."

"Not while the holy Word is treasured up in our hearts."

"Ah! there was the beginning of your sin—

the daring to read and think for yourselves. I shall have to say Ave Marias for you all night."

"What do you think of her?" asked Andrew, when the bright apparition had vanished.

"I think she is too good to remain a Roman Catholic, and I shall pray for her conversion as earnestly as she does for ours."

For several successive days the maiden continued to visit the prison, bringing fresh offerings of fruits and flowers. Not only this, but she also brought books which she hoped would convince them of their errors. And after each visit she went home more intent on their conversion.

"Which of the lads do you say the most prayers for?" inquired her uncle one day.

"I say a great many for them all, but the most, dear uncle, for Louis Montrevel."

"Why for him?"

"Because he is so unhappy about his sweet sisters."

"What wouldst thou give to win him to the Church?"

"Everything I have in the world."

"And yourself too, *ma fille?*"

The girl opened her innocent eyes wide upon the curé.

"I mean would'st thou marry him, if that would bring him back?"

The bloom on her face deepened as she replied,

"But, uncle, he has not a thought of any such thing."

"That does not prove, silly girl, that he never will have. All I want to know is, what thou wouldst say if he should ask thee to become his wife?"

"But, uncle, I have repeated more than three hundred Ave Marias for him, and he does not begin to relent."

"That is not to the purpose, my daughter. He may be proof against thy prayers, and yet be unable to resist thyself. If thou canst save him and the others too, wilt thou do it? that is the question."

"They are gallant lads, dear uncle, and well worth saving."

"I see how it is. Well, to-morrow I will examine into their progress."

The next day the curé went to the prison, and Louise rather reluctantly accompanied him, remaining, however, by his permission, in the keeper's room.

The curé greeted the captives kindly, handing Louis a beautiful bouquet.

"That is from my poor Louise, whose heart is set on thy coming back to the Church."

"Give her my thanks for her great kindness."

"And what else shall I say?"

"Say that I shall never forget to pray for her."

"Dost think her a comely lass?"

"Indeed I do, and, what is better, she has a tender heart."

"That she has, and a pretty fortune to boot. And I will tell you what it is, young man: if you will only abjure your heresy, I will give her to you for your wife, dowry and all."

A flush of surprise passed over Louis' face, and for a moment he could not speak.

"I mean what I say; so take time to recover."

"But mademoiselle?"

"Have no fear. She will not shrink from anything that will effect your conversion."

"But I could not accept such a sacrifice."

"Tush, tush! Is that the way a young man talks when a pretty girl is willing to marry him?"

"That is not all I would say."

"Let Louise come here," motioning to the officer.

He withdrew, presently returning with the maiden, who entered with an air of great timidity.

"Can you find it in your heart to grieve this damsel?"

Rapidly did Louis picture the two futures spread out before him. On the one hand, freedom, wealth, position, and, dearer than all, this beautiful, loving maiden for his bride; on the other a convict's fate—igno-

miny, suffering, death, or a galley slave for life.

And he was only eighteen. Can you blame him that he wavered? Yet it was but for a moment.

"I thank her with all my heart, but I should not be worthy of her if I should renounce my faith."

Louise looked at him with a mute appeal not easy to resist, but he only added:

"Believe me, mademoiselle, it is not that I slight you, but that I cannot deny my Master."

Her uncle would have expostulated, but she prevented him, and offering her hand:

"I would have saved you if I could—farewell."

Unobserved by the curé, he took a little volume from his bosom, and, giving it to her, said in a low voice:

"Read it carefully for my sake. And I pray God it may lead you into the truth."

"He is an ingrate," growled the uncle as he strode rapidly home, his niece being scarcely able to keep pace with him.

"Don't, dear uncle. He only does what he thinks right. We will say prayers for him."

"He shall have no prayers of mine—the child of Satan! To think of his flinging back such a gift in my face! I shall denounce him forthwith."

Louise made no reply till they entered the house, when she set upon him with a flood of entreaties to persuade him to connive at the escape of the boys. At length he promised to think it over, and not to decide till the next morning.

His niece retired to her room, but not to her pillow. Taking the little book out of her pocket, she read on its title-page, "*The New Testament.*"

"It must be a part of the Bible," she said to herself, "for I have heard my uncle speak of the Old and New Testaments. I suppose he would burn it if I told him. But it can do no harm if I hide it under my pillow. Poor Louis! for his sake I will keep it."

Then, kneeling before a crucifix, she be-

sought the holy Mother to have pity on these poor heretics, and to save them from the dreadful fate that threatened them. Toward morning, wearied out, she threw herself on a couch, and falling into a heavy sleep, did not awake till daylight was streaming into the room and the convent-bells were ringing for matins. She hastened down stairs, but the curé had eaten his breakfast and gone out. She was oppressed with dread, and well she might be, for in that system in which she trusted there were no bowels of mercies. Persecution was a high duty, a great mission of the Church. Heretofore she had believed in this duty, though not without a struggle. She was distressed at the doubts which now began to creep over her. So there she sat, looking out of the window with a foreboding heart, which proved only too true a prophet. Her uncle had hastened to the authorities to denounce the three boys as hardened reprobates, under the dominion of the devil.

The day of trial was not long deferred. The youthful prisoners appeared in court,

and being found guilty of the charges brought against them, received sentence of condemnation. But before this sentence could be executed, it was necessary that it should be confirmed by the Parliament of Tournay. So the prisoners were bound together with cords and marched thither. Here they were committed to a dungeon, their trial being deferred that their conversion might once more be attempted. The arguments employed, however, were somewhat anomalous—the logic of pain, the spiritual efforts of this curé, in marked contrast with the persuasions of love in the last experiment, consisting in inquiries, from time to time, whether they were not weary of suffering.

If they were not, it certainly was no fault of their jailers. Rotten straw, filled with vermin, was the couch on which they lay starving for days and weeks, the scantiest allowance of miserable bread being thrown to them through the grating. Here the poor boys wasted away without the touch of any loving hand—without a syllable of cheer

from any human being. Yet they had but to utter one word of abjuration and their prison-doors would fly open.

Wonderful was the faith that preserved them from uttering that word—that gave them such lofty heroism when so near starvation!

But temptation was to come to them in still another form. Two additional prisoners were one day shut into their dungeon, whom they were surprised to recognize as old schoolmates, who had been arrested, like themselves, for the crime of worshipping God according to the dictates of their conscience. The faith of these comrades, however, was not proof against the trials into which it had brought them. They could sacrifice much for their religion, but not everything. In their case the blessed seed had fallen upon stony ground; and though it had sprung up, yet for want of root it could not resist the burning heat of persecution.

The Mirecourt boys saw their vacillation, and earnestly implored them to remain stead-

fast. It was in vain. They wept over their own weakness, but they yielded and lost the martyr's crown.

At length came the rescript from the minister of state, conveying the king's decree. The parliament was convoked. The youthful prisoners, pale and emaciated almost to skeletons, were brought forth from their miserable dungeon and placed in the dock. Then the judge put on his black cap and read their sentence:

"You, Louis Montrevel, and Andrew and Henry Oster, convicted of being Huguenots, and of having attempted to leave the kingdom for the purpose of securing freedom in your detestable heresy, by the order of our most gracious majesty, Louis XIV., I do hereby condemn to the galleys for the remainder of your natural life."

What a blow to fall on those young heads! Brave as they were, and hard as they had struggled to prepare themselves for the worst, their hearts quailed with dread, while drops of agony stood on their pallid faces.

Observing their emotion, the judge gave them one more opportunity to retrieve their fate. But they instantly repelled the proposition; they could not deny their Lord.

So the obstinate heretics were removed to another city, where the gang was to be formed. And here they were cast into a filthy hole, where no ray of light ever penetrated, and where were crowded more than thirty miserable ruffians, convicted of every sort of wickedness and crime.

Dreadful companionship was this for the pure-minded boys! Assailed on every hand with jeers and taunts and gibes, while their ears were filled with obscene ribaldry and jests and horrid profanity, they could only lift up their hearts in silent prayer to Him who was made perfect through suffering.

At length the gang was completed, and being chained two and two, they were marched together to Dunkirk. Language cannot describe the sufferings of this route. We have all shuddered at the appalling accounts of "the middle passage" on board the

African slavers. But this passage could not have exceeded, in horrors, the fearful march of the galley-slaves to their destination. Here were congregated the basest, most profligate characters—a company of hardened convicts, "topfull of direst cruelty"—brutal, blasphemous, fiend-like. Shrieks, groans and dreadful imprecations were freely intermingled with the frequent crack of the blood-bringing lash.

What must this scene have been to those virtuous and high-minded boys? To add the last drop to their full cup, they were from this time separated from one another. Poor Louis was chained to the very vilest of that vile set—a scoffing miscreant who had been guilty of every species of crime, and who, having twice escaped from the galleys and been retaken, was now on his way there once more. As may be conceived, he was in a man-hating and God-defying mood.

To be thus bound to a mass of loathsome moral corruption, a body of living death, while his blood was chilled with the foul lan-

guage, and awful blasphemies and curses poured continually into his ear, was indeed a trial under which the boy's spirit quailed and wellnigh sank. Then he cried unto God:

"Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

"Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

"Hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily."

And the Lord heard his supplications and strengthened him out of Zion. There came to his mind consoling promises:

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass."

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Louis thought of his Saviour's patience under the indignities heaped upon him, of his prayers for his persecutors, of his infinite pity for sinners. And there was kindled in

his heart a tender compassion and an intense yearning for the salvation of this wretched being with whom he was so closely interlinked. This enabled him to bear all his abuse with a divine meekness which at first only exasperated the wretch to greater violence.

Thus with aching limbs and bleeding feet did this miserable gang march side by side on their dreary road, being cruelly beaten whenever from weariness their steps faltered. Miserably fed by day, at night they were lodged in some dismal outhouse, where—worse off than the beasts—they had not even straw on which to lie down, while their inhuman driver seemed ever on the alert to invent new modes of discomfort and torture.

Under all these trials and provocations, such a wonderful patience and meekness did Louis exhibit, and so kind and gentle was his treatment of his fellow-convict, that at length, as the constant trickling of water will wear away even the granite, so that obdurate nature, seemingly harder than rock, began to soften.

"I tell you what it is," he broke out one day: "I can stand out against 'most anybody or anything, but" (with a dreadful oath) "I can't, somehow, seem to stand against such an innocent lamb as you. I've been thinking over those days, so long ago, when my mother used to teach me my prayers to the Virgin. Many's the time she's led me to the grand cathedral, and taught me to sign the cross on my forehead with holy water, the more's the pity. For when I found out what d——d fellows the priests were, with all their flummeries and falsehoods, and making money by cart-loads out of people's sins, then I gave up attending mass; and finally I broke away from everything good, till I came to believe that God was nothing but a bugbear to scare children with. So now here I am, at the bottom of everything."

There was a touch of feeling in the man's voice, which made Louis' heart beat quicker. And as they travelled on he told him the wonderful story of the Man of Sorrows, and of the dark depths into which he descended

for the redemption of man. He told him of his holy life, his mingling with the vilest, his patience under provocation, his agony in the garden, and death upon the cross, with his betrayal by one disciple, and his cruel desertion by the others. Nor did he forget his pardon of the dying thief.

As Duress listened his heart melted within him, while a tear or two slowly rolled down his cheeks.

"Oh, why could I not have heard all this before?" he exclaimed in a broken voice.

And so the long days passed away, the hoary sinner drinking in blessed teachings from the lips of the earnest boy.

Louis had become so reduced from his long sufferings, with a scarcity of food, that his little remaining strength was rapidly failing.

"I don't believe I shall be able to go on in the morning," he said to Duress one night, when they had stopped for lodging in a crumbling barn; "and they will have to leave me here to die of starvation."

"We don't do that, my lamb. Here is my last ration, which I don't want."

Louis protested, but was finally persuaded to swallow it; and dry and hard as was the morsel, it somewhat revived him.

"Now, if you can lay your head on me you may, perhaps, catch a nap or two. I know I'm not fit company for such a lamb, and I'm not over clean, but I shall make a better pillow than the floor."

Touched by his kindness, Louis complied and soon fell into a sound slumber. But when in the morning came the summons to march, he was unable to stand.

"You will have to leave me, Duress."

"I'll stay and starve with you first. But you keep still and I'll fix it."

When the driver of the gang came along, Duress made a sign that he had something to communicate.

"What's the row?" asked the man as he approached.

"Look a-here; that's one of the Huguenot cubs, and he's going to give us the dodge.

Now if you want to get him to the galleys, I'll just take him there in spite of himself. So give us the word, and I'll grab him fast," with a sprinkling of oaths all along.

"Serve 'm right—the hated cub! Yes, grab him and welcome, only your chain must have a longer pull."

When this was done, Duress, roughly catching up the boy: "Now open your mouth if you dare."

The driver and his subalterns, who had gathered round, broke into a hoarse laugh, and with the crack of the whip and a volley of imprecations the marching recommenced.

"I had to sham, or the wretch would have left you there to die. And I had to swear too, or I couldn't have deceived him, though I knew 'twould hurt your feelings. But you'll overlook it."

"It is the Master, Duress, whom it offends, and you must ask forgiveness of him."

"Well, I'll try my best to break it off, though it comes as natural as my breath. I dunno as I'm doing you any kindness to take

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you along, but I can't spare my little priest yet a while."

Most tenderly Duress carried the boy, who, from sheer exhaustion, fell asleep on his shoulder. Whenever the driver or any of his underlings passed by, they would chuckle, as much as to say, "That's a good one."

"I'm afraid I have tired you out, Duress," said Louis, on awakening from his long nap, refreshed and able to bear his own weight once more.

"Bless your heart! you're nothing but skin and bone. I've been thinking how much better a load I had than most of the things I've lugged; a body murdered, for instance." But seeing Louis involuntarily shudder: "I'm a brute from letting on this way to such an innocent lamb."

At length the toilsome march was over, and Louis Montrevel and his new friend were entered as slaves upon one of the six galleys stationed at the port of Dunkirk.

The French galley was a vessel about a hundred and fifty feet long and forty wide.

On each side were twenty-five benches, to every one of which was attached a long, heavy oar, which was pulled by six convicts chained by the leg to a bench. There were thus three hundred of these rowers to each galley. About fifty free marines worked the sails and managed the vessel. And in addition were a hundred soldiers, with a number of officers for general command and for the custody of the slaves.

The galley had at her bow five guns ranging from eighteen to thirty-six pounders. Her mode of attack was to bear down heavily with her oars, so as to drive her prow into the enemy's stern, and then, firing her guns, to board him with her soldiers and marines. A part of the guns were always kept charged and pointed at the convicts, in order to prevent their taking part with the enemy, and to suppress mutiny. But as mowing down the rowers would leave the vessel powerless, these galleys were mainly used for coasting and for cutting off stragglers, though occasionally they were employed for conveying official per-

sons to a distant port. Their principal use, however, was as a penal infliction for those convicted of capital crimes, such as murder, burglary and *Protestantism*.

The overseer, or slave-driver, was called *Le Comite*, and the two inferiors under him, Les Sous Comites. Their badge of office was the cowhide, to the lavish use of which they were urged by the superior officers when a greater rate of speed was desired. On the naked backs of these poor fellows, labouring at the oar and stripped from the waist upward, thick and fast would fall the dreadful blows, bringing away strips of skin, and followed by the shrieks of the victims, as the blood flowed from their lacerated flesh.

So far as the hated Huguenots were concerned, all this was neither more nor less than the long iron arms of the Inquisition reaching out to crush them, although under the disguise of civil law. Such degrading bondage! such incessant toil! such cruel taskmasters!—separated from all refining as well as religious influences, and subjected to the

vilest companionship, the most loathsome associations!—what wonder, if under this constant wear of body and soul, the faith of some should at length give away?

Nurtured by a tender mother in the bosom of a refined and affectionate family, Louis was ill prepared for the dreadful scenes to which he was now introduced. As the future spread out gloomily before him, no wonder that hot tears flowed from his eyes.

"Cheer up, messmate!" said a voice behind him, and turning his head he saw Duress, from whom he had temporarily been separated, but who was now chained to the same bench.

"You'll hardly thank me for bringing you here, my lamb. But since here you are, I hope I shall find some chance of easing your dreadful burden, if ever so little."

"Thank you, Duress, but I cannot endure looking forward to years spent in this dreadful place."

"I don't believe it'll be *many* years, for though you've got a tough spirit, your weak body can never long stand this hard work.

But have you seen that poor old fellow on the bench before us?—no, not the one you are looking at, but that other with white hair, and just such a patient look as you Huguenots all wear. I'll be bound he's one of you."

Louis fixed his eyes in the direction pointed out, and having gazed intently a few minutes, exclaimed in a low voice:

"Why, that is Father Legarme. My God!" lifting his eyes to heaven, "have mercy on the holy man!"

It was not long before he had a chance to make himself known to his good pastor, who soon told him his sad story. It seems that after being arrested, convicted of heresy and condemned to death, his sentence was commuted. So here he was in chains as a galley-slave.

It was one of the saddest things in Louis' sad life to see this venerable patriarch tugging at the oars by day, and at night cowering for sleep under his rude bench. He felt as if he would gladly have performed *his* tasks and borne his stripes. Alas! it

was almost more than he could do to endure his own.

Apart from the liability to those occasional extra labours which involved indescribable suffering, the ordinary condition of these unhappy beings was painful in the extreme. Constantly chained to the bench at which they sat by day, and under which they slept by night, exposed to all the vicissitudes of the elements, covered with vermin, scantily clothed, miserably fed, and degraded almost below the brutes by the treatment they received, they were compelled by sheer force of the whip to render an amount of work at the oar which under no other system could have been extracted from the human muscles.

Such were the toils and such the sufferings in which Father Legarme, Louis Montrevel and Duress were now intimately associated, the two latter being chained to the same bench. The consoling passages from the Divine Word which the boy repeated to his companion in their chance moments of intercourse fell upon his thirsty spirit with a

quickening and comforting power, while the occasional counsels of the aged pastor were eagerly treasured up. And a blessed comfort it was to the two older Christians to see Christ formed more and more distinctly in the life of the late hardened reprobate.

Day after day—month after month—year after year—no outward change in the life of these worn, oppressed, yet trusting convicts! But He who looks upon the hearts saw that they, each and all, were fast ripening for heaven.

It was wonderful that Father Legarme's strength had held out so many years. Of late, however, Louis and Duress had noticed a failure in his powers of endurance.

It was one of those days of oppressive heat in the month of August when, ordinarily, labour was made light as possible. But as the officers desired to reach a certain port with the utmost despatch, commands were given for a twelve hours' pull without a moment's intermission. In order to accomplish this the comites, from time to time, would

put into the mouths of the rowers pieces of bread dipped in wine, which they did while they were pulling, so as to prevent the necessity of their dropping the oar.

The crack of the whip, the shrieks and yells of the bleeding victims, the awful oaths of the comites and the shouts of the officers urging them on—what a scene of horrors was there presented! And how did Louis' heart ache for Father Legarme toiling thus in the burning sun!

"The old father won't last over for another such day as this," said Duress in a low voice to Louis, to which he could only answer by a deep sigh.

It was toward the very last of the passage that the good pastor's strength finally gave way, and he was obliged to slacken his efforts. The comite, provoked beyond measure to lose his services at such a juncture, rained on him blows like hail, till the old man dropped in a swoon. There he lay without consciousness or motion till they reached their port. Then the whistle was sounded, and a dose of

opium being administered all round to ensure sound slumber as a preparation for the toils of the coming day, the tired oarsmen dropped under their benches.

The moment their comites were out of the way, both Louis and Duress, exhausted as they were, sprang forward to see if any life might be lingering in that poor wreck of a body. When they found that he still breathed, they almost regretted that all was not over.

"Poor old fellow!" said Duress, sorrowfully; "I thought he'd have got inside the bright gates this time surely, but here he is still, the more's the pity. Since he's alive, though, I'm bound to take care of him. But you must go straight back, my lamb, for the comites, one or the other of them, may pass along here any minute. And if they should nab you, 'twould be a hard case."

"But I must stay and help you."

"'Twont do, messmate. Don't you remember the threat they made the last time you helped him out of a swoon? Besides, you

could do nothing for him which I can't do, for I'm an old hand in these cases."

"But you are in as much danger as I."

"You let me alone, my lamb, and give heed to my words. You can see and hear everything from your bench, and will be within call if I want you, while now you're only in the way. So, if you don't want to distress me, *march!*"

All this time both of them had been chafing the old man's limbs, but thus entreated, Louis tenderly laid down his hand and withdrew. When Father Legarme's pulses grew a little stronger, Duress tore pieces from his shirt, and dipping them in water laid them gently on his inflamed wounds, after which he fed him from his own scanty allowance.

"It is of little use, my son," said the good father, trying to smile, "to patch up this poor tenement, which is fast falling to pieces. I am sorry not to bear my dying testimony to my Master's faithfulness before all these poor creatures, but he knows I have the will. Do all you can for my beloved Louis,

and tell him that God will never suffer him to be tempted above what he is able."

"That I will, but he himself is listening to every word you say."

At this point Louis came forward, and pressing his lips to the trembling hand of his beloved friend, said, as distinctly as his sobs would allow:

"Pray for me once more, my father!"

The dying man, having offered up a few broken but fervent petitions, then gave them his parting blessing, when Duress insisted on Louis' leaving them. Thus driven away, he stole back to his station, and leaning against the bench, looked gloomily around him.

It was a sad picture that met his eye. Under the galley-benches were huddled, one over another, the exhausted convicts, buried in the deathlike slumber of opium. Many of them had dropped down in their weariness, without stopping to put on any covering. And there in the bright moonlight he could distinctly see their backs gashed and bleeding from the merciless cowhide, while

the mild queen of heaven looked down pityingly on this spectacle of woe.

"Is this persecution to continue for ever?" he said to himself.

It was indeed a dreary future that stretched away before him. He had often felt that martyrdom would be a blessed exchange for his present existence. In a fearful crisis, such as occurred under the pressure of inquisitorial tortures or in confronting a violent death, the excitement sometimes occasioned a rallying of all the vital forces of body and mind, which sustained and elevated the soul to a pitch of heavenly rapture.

But these days of degrading, bitter, hopeless servitude—slowly revolving, one after another, in what seemed an interminable cycle; these days of sickening toil and abuse, in which the spirit was fettered with chains dragging it in the dust; days when the physical frame became too weary and worn for the utterance of prayer, while no blessed Sabbath rest ever came to strengthen and refresh;—oh it was this lingering martyrdom

of the soul, wearing away, little by little, all its vital forces, it was this which Louis felt he had not courage longer to endure.

"Will the Lord cast off for ever?" he cried out in his agony, "and will he be favorable no more?"

"Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?"

"Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?"

Then stole in upon him terrible questionings, such as the tempter well understands how to suggest:

"Who knows that there is a God? If there was, and he was benevolent as had been represented, would he turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of his children? Would he suffer his chosen ones to be hunted from place to place like wild beasts, and to become the very offscouring of the earth?"

Thoughts of the tender-hearted Louise also came to him, and of her earnest efforts to save him from this dreadful doom.

"And have I sacrificed all my earthly pros-

pects for a mere fable?" he exclaimed in bitterness.

These doubts and questionings ran riot in his bewildered mind, ploughing deep furrows in the very centre of his being. In the midst of this conflict, while great drops of anguish stood on his forehead, and such rending sobs broke forth as no bodily torture had been able to force from him, he suddenly catches the clear tones of Father Legarme:

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

These words of the dying martyr broke the tempter's hold. As at the approach of sunlight the moles and bats and all the monsters of darkness flee to their hiding-places, so, at this single glimpse of the Sun of Righteousness did all his evil thoughts melt and vanish away. What a change had passed over everything! As he thought of his dismantled home, of his noble father and mother, his brothers and little sisters, and of the scattered flock into which the hungry wolves had fastened their bloody fangs, this passage was recalled to him:

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Then he thought of his tried friend, Duress, whom he had led to Christ, who for years had borne faithful witness to the truth, and who at this moment stood unflinchingly at the post of danger. Was it not worth all his sufferings to bring to Christ one such soul?

As he looked round once more on that pitiable sight which had lately harrowed his soul to madness—the sight of wretched convicts, whose degrading bondage and fearful sufferings were uncheered by any light from the great future—there came a voice from the infinite heights:

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Trust to infinite love, and one day all these discords shall be harmonized."

"I can, I *do* trust," he responded, while every heart-beat uttered,

"Thy will, O God, not mine, be done!"

An ineffable calm stole over him, while the bitter sorrows of the past and of that future which had seemed interminable, to his now cleared vision appeared only a light affliction, which is but for a *moment*, working out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The long night had dragged through its appointed hours. The rising sun was just tinging the waters with a faint glow. It looked down upon Louis Montrevel leaning quietly against his bench, his pale face illumined with celestial light—a face which at that moment no one would have taken for that of a galley-slave.

It looked also upon the dying martyr and upon his homely, faithful nurse. As Duress

bent over to moisten his parched mouth, those white lips faltered out:

"Sing to me."

And the rough convict in a low voice sang one of the sweet Huguenot hymns he had learned of Louis.

Just then the comite passed along. But Duress did not pause in his song.

"What are you here for? Stop your infernal noise and back to your bench."

"Don't you see the good man's dying? So I must stay here and try to ease his passage over Jordan."

"Over to purgatory, you mean," replied the comite savagely; adding, with a dreadful oath, "We'll soon send you after him."

At the sound of that discordant voice, with a startled look Father Legarme opened his eyes.

"He's away now," whispered Duress tenderly, "and your soul can depart in peace."

The old man looked upward, exclaiming:

"Glorious Saviour! Come, Lord, come quickly!"

One moment more and he had passed into the celestial city. Duress folded those wasted hands, and then wiping his eyes with the back of his bronzed hand, returned to his post, saying to Louis:

"The Lord take care of thee, my lamb, for I shall soon follow the good father."

An hour had passed. The whistle had roused all hands, and the body of the martyr had been flung into the sea.

"*The bastinado for Duress!*" shouted the comite.

A shudder ran round the deck, while Louis closed his eyes in earnest supplication.

Being led forth, the convict was stretched prostrate over a plank, while two stout galley-slaves held his arms pinioned and two more his legs. Then a gigantic Turk approached, and with his utmost vigour applied the cow-hide, with every lash bringing away a long strip of skin. Not a groan escaped the sufferer, but after a few blows he broke out in prayer:

"O Lord! give me strength to suffer for

thee. Forgive my poor comrades ; forgive all my sins and take me to thyself!"

"We'll soon stop his whining," said the comite, furiously urging on the Turk to greater force.

"Forgive my enemies! forgive the comite for his cruelty, and teach him thy blessed Gospel!"

"The blessed cowhide shall teach you to shut your mouth."

With the twelfth stroke, Duress lost the power of speech, but still the comite urged on the Turk:

"Faster! harder! Let him smart!"

The savage executioner continued till the sweat rolled down his face, when he dropped the lash, exclaiming:

"I am worn out: I cannot fetch another stroke."

Then the comite seized the dreadful instrument, and dealt stroke after stroke till he too was exhausted, when he flung down his whip, saying coolly:

"I think likely we've done for him now,

though he had as many lives as a cat. Turn him over, there."

He spoke the truth. The bloody instrument had opened for another saint the gates of paradise. The once hardened reprobate had gone to receive the martyr's crown.

"And I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

"Revered pastor! beloved Duress!" exclaimed Louis with clasped hands: "your conflict is ended, your victory won! help me to endure till my turn comes!"

The mangled form found a kind shelter in the blue waters, and Louis Montrevel, with the peace of God in his soul, took up his cross anew and went on his way.

APPENDIX.

THE following books on persecution and martyrdom may, as they have time and opportunity, be read by the young :

1. The Golden Rule.
2. Hadassah.
3. Martyr's Daughter.
4. Good for Evil.
5. The Martyred Missionaries.
6. The Bohemian Martyrs.
7. Witnesses for Christ.
8. Leila Ada, the Converted Jewess.
9. The Waldenses, illustrated.
10. Madagascar Martyrs.
11. Traditions of the Covenanters.
12. Huguenot Galley Slaves.
13. Annals of Persecution.
14. English Martyrology.
15. History of the Inquisition.
16. French Protestants.

All these books are issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, and may be read with profit by youth. They illustrate the power of sustaining grace; they show what God can enable old and young to do. As the mind of the reader shall mature, let him read such books as these:

1. The Cloud of Witnesses.
2. Milner's Church History.
3. Schaff's Church History.
4. Josephus.
5. Quick's Synodicon.
6. Fox's Book of Martyrs.

It is a kind wish, May you never be persecuted; it is a kinder, May you never be a persecutor.

THE END.